

THE *Libri*
Mystery of Faith
Now Opened up *Plainly*
Or some Sermons
Concerning F A I T H,

Wherein the Nature, Excellency,
and usefulness of that noble Grace is much
Cleared, and the practice thereof
most powerfully Pressed.

Whereunto are added other three Sermons,
two concerning the *Great Salvation*,
a third concerning *Death*.

By Mr. *Andrew Gray*, late Minister of the Gospel
in *Glasgow*.

All these Sermons being now carefully Revised,
and much Corrected.

Joh. 3. 18. *He that believeth not is condemned already,
because he hath not believed in the Name of the only
begotten Son of GOD.*

EDINBURGH,

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lent Majesty, Anno DOM. 1704.

THE
Mystery of Faith

Opened up
Or some Sermons

Concerning F. A. T. H.

Written by the Author, &c.

and the friends of that noble Order in which
Clarity and the practice thereof
is not powerfully revealed.

Whereunto are added other three Sermons

Two containing the same subject

By Mr. Andrew Gray, Minister of the Gospel
in Glasgow.

All these Sermons being now carefully Revised
and much Corrected.

Printed by J. B. at the Edinburgh Press, in the Name of the
Proprietors, 1790.

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Christian Reader,

Amongst many weighty and Soul-piercing Sentences that you will find in these following Sermons, this is one, *That the Professors of this age, whether they go to Heaven or Hell they will be the greatest debtors that shall be in either place: the one to the free Grace of GOD, and the other to his Justice.* And certainly if we speak of these in this time, whose blessed lot it shall be to inherit the kingdom; they cannot but acknowledge themselves indebted to his love, above all that have gone before them, for washing them from such ugly pollutions, as this generation hath been defiled with, for bringing them through so great tribulations, preserving them in the midst of so great tentations, and dangerous snares, as have encompassed them; yea, and still keeping in the light before them, notwithstanding of so many blasts (if we may so speak) from all the four winds of Hell to blow it out, & on the other hand, if we should speak of these who in this Generation shall perish, assuredly their debt unto Divine Justice must be exceeding great, above all who are gone down to the pit before them, because the roll of their mercies are found to have been many cubits longer, and many cubits broader, than theirs who lived in the preceding ages: and the great things that the Lord hath wrought in our days, have born a greater testimony against the wickedness, hardness and atheism of this time, than many former. But above all, the great measure of Gospel-light that he hath no less plentifully offered, than wonderfully preserved to this generation, beyond all our Ancestors; both undoub-

A 2

To the Reader.

tedly made the sin of these who shall utterly reject
their own mercy, so out of measure sinful, and their
unbelief so exceedingly inexcusable, that their guilt
must needs justifie *Chorazin and Bethsaida, or Sodom
and Gomorrah, in that day when every man shall give ac-
count of himself to God.* And amongst the many
preaching witnesses, that (alas we are afraid) shall
compear in that day against many yet living in their
pleasures, and dead while they live; This now glorified
Author cannot but be one, whose testimony must be
very condemning, especially to the vain, loose, ne-
gligent and time-wasting youth in this age. For
when he was first drawn to the Ministry, he was but
a youth indeed, scarce twenty years compleat, far
within that age, that by the constitution of this
Church, (except in case of more than common abi-
lities, which indeed he had) is required for enter-
ing into that great and holy Calling; and for the
space of two yeass after, (which was all the time
that the Church enjoyed his labour, he was helped
to press the truths and threatnings of God so home
upon the Consciences of his Hearers, that as it was
observed of him, by one of his most Learned and
pious Collegues Mr. *Durham*, (who is now in glory
with him) he did many times cause the hair of their
head to stand up: The Lord was not only hereby ve-
rifying his word, that he can *take the weak things of
the world to confound the Strong, and out of the mouth of
Babes can perfect his own praise*, but designing also (as
would seem of purpose) to send a Boy out of the
School for a reprovcr of the sluggishness of his peo-
ple, that thereby the Aged might be the more a-
shamed, and the Younger more afraid; Neither do we
think that this was all, but truly when we consider
what measure of Graces, Gifts and Experiences the
Lord did bestow upon so young a person, and then
with what humility, self denial, gravity, prudence,
diligence, authority and moderation, he was helped



To the Reader.

to manage these Talents during that short time of his Ministry; It may be justly conceived that the Lord brought him forth to be a great conviction even to many of us in the Ministry, who came into our Master's Vineyard long before him, and will go out behind him: And indeed to us it looketh somewhat like the Lord's taking up of the *little Child*, and setting him amongst the midst of his contending Disciples in these times, that even they who would be greatest amongst us, might be least, and see somewhat of their own weakness.

As to this little Piece, whatever ye shall find in it, it hath this to say for it self, that whereas many writings in the world, do intrude themselves upon the Press; yet this the Press hath violently thrust into the world: For some young Student from his good affection to the edification of the Lord's People, and (no doubt) from his high esteem of the precious Author his memory, having given in to the Press, a Copy of some of these Sermons, being only Notes taken from his Mouth when he preached them, no sooner were they seen abroad, but all the Presses in the Nation fell a labouring about them; so that (if we mistake not) in less than two or three months time, three or four Impressions were cast off, yet all of them so imperfect and maimed, that howbeit the excellency of the Matter, and the fresh remembrance of the worthy Author his Name, made them very sweet to many, (especially those who had heard him preach) yet the unsuitable dress wherein they appeared, and the mistakes of the first Writers (they being hardly able to take up every thing as it was spoken) occasioning diverse material failings in the sense, besides lesser faults, could not but be a trouble to those who are acquainted not only with the singular graces, but parts also of the eminent Youth. This gave occasion to some friends to speak a little what way these prejudices, which both the Truth and the

To the Reader.

Author's Name might ly under, by these incorrect Impressions might be taken off. And finding that the Copy, which by providence, the worthy young Gentlewoman who was his wife, had lying by her, though it was but Notes taken from his mouth, yet was the most correct that could be found: And that also did contain the whole purposes that he had preached upon these Texts, yea, the whole purposes concerning Faith that he had preached, according to that method purposed in the first of the Sermons formerly published. This was undertaken to be revised by some, who, albeit none of the fittest for these employments, yet rather, or nothing should be done in the business, were content to bestow some hours upon it, according as other necessary employments would permit. And now having sought out all the Notes of these Sermons which we could find from other hands, and compared them with the Copy, above mentioned, we do again present them to the people, not with any confidence that our pains hath put any effect upon them; only we have some hopes, the whole subject being now before them, and these things in the way of expression helped, which either might seem to be somewhat unpleasant, or lyable to mistakes, they shall not now be less edifying, nor less acceptable, than formerly they were. We did not think fit to make any considerable alterations as to the method or other things of that kind, lest happily by straining his excellent purposes too much, to shape them to the ordinary rules, or to reduce them to that order which might have pleased our selves, we should have wronged the matter it self at least have put them to a loss who did hear him preach; and it may be now upon their reading things in that same order as they heard them, will be the more readily brought under the impressions of that liveness, power and weight, which (it may be) formerly they felt upon their hearts when he was speaking. If the method do not altogether satisfie some spirits, or the explication seem not so full; or if they find some

To the Reader.

Some introductions which possibly lead not in so close, or seem not so suitable to the subject of the Sermons; or happily now and then there be some little digressions from the main purpose, we shall desire that this may not at all be constructed to be the Authors ignorance of rules and method, or his want of abilities in humane learning, it being well known to those who were best acquainted with him, that he indeed had a scholastick spirit, and was in reading, far beyond his age and opportunities for studying; but as to all these we shall intreat you rather to consider, 1. His age, and that his gifts were in the very moulding and breaking (as we speak) in the point of order and method; when the Lord was pleased to call him home from his work. 2. *That every man hath his proper Gift of God*, who in his great wisdom, and certainly for the good of his Church, doth so order, that there is somewhat singular and peculiar almost in every mans way, as to these things. 3. For any thing we know, he had never that high esteem of this, or any other of his labours, as to design any of them for publick view; and these are but notes taken from his mouth. 4. We are perswaded he studied more his hearers than himself. Ye will easily perceive, when ye have but read a little, that he hath been a man of a very zealous temper, that the great benefit of his Spirit, and that which he did wholly spend himself about, was to make people know their dangerous condition by nature, and by all means to persuade them *to believe*, and lay hold upon the great *Salvation*: And truly, that a man in such a frame should less attend to these lesser things, is not to be wondered at. And indeed, though these things be good in themselves and worthy to be looked to in their own place, yet for a minister of the Gospel in all Auditories, and upon all occasions, to pin up every purpose to such a method, and insist into such a measure of explications and Criticisms upon words, it is but to fester himself, and to starve his People. 5. Consider the

To the Reader

• dulness of the most part of the hearers of this age, and
• how hard a thing it is to awake a sleeping world, and
• to get them but to think that it doth concern them to
• hear in earnest; and possibly it was not a small piece
• of spiritual wisdom in him, (and it may be not unfit
• to imitat by others) to begin or end all his Sermons
• with an awakning word concerning Heaven, or hell, or
• Judgment: and the danger of choosing the evil, and
• refusing the good. 6. For digressions, the truth is,
• that his soul was so filled with such longings after
• Heaven and Glory, and so inflamed with the Love of
• Christ, especially towards the latter end of his race, that
• when he fell on these subjects, upon which (ye will see)
• most of these digressions are, he could not well contain
• himself nor easily bring off his own spirit, a thing not
• unusual to the Saints in Scripture: and howbeit such
• things might seem somewhat singular (in the time)
• and not so coherent; yet now we have ground to ap-
• prehend, that they were often strong influences of the
• Lords Spirit, stirring up a lamp as it were into a sudden
• blaze, that was not to burn long in his Church. But
• now we shall detain you no longer, only this we may
• assure you of, that though these Sermons are neither
• so exact, nor so full, as doubtless they would have been,
• if they had come from the authors own pen; yet as
• we dar say, they were studied with prayer, preached
• with power, and backed with Success; so also, if ye
• shall read them with Consideration, meditat with pray-
• er, and practise with diligence, ye shall neither find
• your time nor pains ill bestowed; but shall have cause
• to bless the Lord for this, amongst other helps that he
• hath given, for making you meet for the inheritance
• of the Saints in light, that it may be blest to these
• ends, is the earnest desire and prayer of your Servants
• in the wo. k of the Lord.

Ro: Trail.

Jo: Sterling.

The

The Mystery of FAITH Opened up.

S E R M O N I.

1 Joh. 3. 23. This is his Commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, &c.

THis everlasting Gospel (in which there are drawn so many precious draughts and divine Lineaments of the transcendent beauty of a crucified Saviour, and of the riches of his unsearchable Grace) is a most precious and excellent thing, not only because it doth contain most absolute and sublime Precepts and Commands, in the exercise and obedience of which, we do not only attain unto the highest pitch in holiness, but likewise, because it containeth most rich and precious Promises, in the possession and fruition of which, we are advanced to the highest pinnacle of eternal blessedness, this is clear in the Grace of Faith; for what doth more purifie the heart, and stamp it with the Image of the invisible GOD, than this Grace of Faith? And what richer Promises are annexed to any duty, than to this duty of believing, to wit, everlasting life, and fruition of God. So that if we dwelt forty days at the foot of the Mount Sinai, and had been under the greatest discovering and condemning power of the Law, we may yet come with boldness to Mount Zion, and there embrace Jesus Christ, who is the end of the Law for righte-

The Mystery of Faith,

thoughtless to such as believe; Upon which Mount he standeth, holding forth the Golden Scepter of his peace, desiring us to embrace Him, and his crying out that word in *Isai. 65. 1. Behold Me, behold Me.* O! may we not summon Angels, and these twenty four Elders about the Throne, to help us to wonder that ever such a command as this came forth, that we should believe on the Name of the SON of GOD, after that we had broken that first and primitive Command, *That we should not eat of the forbidden tree*; Was not this indeed to make mercy rejoyce over judgment? And O! may we not wonder at the precious Oath of the everlasting Covenant whereby he hath sworn, *That he delighteth not in the death of sinners*? What (suppose ye) were poor Adams thoughts, when at the first doctrine of Free-grace, and of a crucified CHRIST JESUS a Saviour, was preached unto him in Paradise? What a divine surprisal was this, that Heaven should have Preached Peace to Earth, after that Earth had proclaimed war against Heaven? Was not this a low step of condescendency, to behold an offended GOD preaching peace and good will to a guilty sinner? What could Self-destroying Adam think of these morning and first discoveries of this everlasting Covenant? CHRIST as it were, in the morning of time, giving vent to that infinite Love; which was resting in his Bosom and precious Heart, before the Foundation of the World was laid. We know not whether the infiniteness of his Love, the Eternity of his Love, or the freedom of it, maketh up the greatest wonder; But sure, these three joyned together, make up a matchless and everlasting wonder. Would any of you ask the question, What is CHRIST worth? We could give no answer so suitable as this, it is above all the Arithmethick of all the Angels in Heaven and all the Men on Earth, to calculate His worth: all Men here must be put to a divine *nonplus*: This was *Jobs* divinity, *Job 8. 13. Man knoweth not the price of wisdom*

wisdom. And must not JESUS CHRIST who is the precious Object of Faith, and Wisdom of the Father be a seperemient and excellent One, who hath that Name of KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords, not only engraven on his Vesture, (which pointeth out the conspicuousness of his Majesty) but even also upon his Thigh, to point out that in all his goings and motions, he proveth himself to be higher than the Kings of the Earth? And howbeit the naked proposing of the Object doth not convert; yet if once our souls were admitted to behold such a sight as Christ in his Beauty and Majesty, and to be satisfied with the divine rays of his transcendent glory, then certainly we should find a blessed necessity laid upon us of closing with him: for Christ hath a sword proceeding out of his precious Mouth, by which he doth subject and subjugate his own to himself, as well as he hath a sword girded upon his Thigh, by which he judgeth and maketh war with his enemies. We confess it is not only hard, but simply impossible, to commit a Hyperbole in commending of Him; His worth being always so far above our expressions, and our expressions always far beneath his worth, therefore we may be put to propose that desire unto him, *Exalt thy self, O LORD, above the Heavens.*

But now to our purpose, being at this time to begin our discourse upon that radical and precious Grace of Faith, we intend to speak of it under this twofold notion and consideration: First, We shall speak of it as it is justifieing, or as it doth lay hold upon the righteousness of a crucified Saviour making application of the precious promises in the Covenant of free Grace, which we call justifying Faith. And in the second place, we shall speak a little unto Faith, as it doth lay hold upon CHRIST'S strength, for advancing the work of mortification, and doth discover the personal excellencies of JESUS CHRIST by which we advance in the work of holiness, and divine conformity with GOD, which we call Sanctifying Faith. However, it is not to be supposed, that these are different habits.

The Mystery of Faith

of Faith, but different acts flowing from the same saving habit, laying hold and exercising themselves upon Christ in different respects, and for diverse ends. Now to speak upon the first, we have made choice of these words. The Apostle *John* in the former verse, hath been pointing out the precious advantages of the Grace of Obedience, and of keeping his Commands, that such a one hath as it were, an arbitrary power with GOD and doth receive many precious returns of Prayer: As likewise, that one who is exercised in the Grace of Repentance, is GODS delight: which is included in this, that he doth these things which are well pleasing in his sight. And now in these words, he doth as it were, answer an objection that might be proposed, about the impossibility of attaining these precious advantages, seeing his Commands were so large, and that hardly they could be remembred. This he doth sweetly answer, by setting down in this one verse, a short compend or breviary both of Law and Gospel, viz. *That we should love one another*, which is the Compend of the Law: And, *That we should believe on the Name of his Son*; which is the Compend of the Gospel. And by this, he sheweth the Christian that there are not many things required of him, for attaining these excellent advantages; but if he exercise himself in the obedience of these two comprehensive commandments, he shall find favour both with GOD and Man. And as concerning this precious Grace of Faith; We have, 1. The advantages of it implied in the words, and clear also from the Scope, as (no doubt) all the Commands have infinit advantages infolded in their bolom, which redounds to a Believer by his practising of them. And 2. The excellency of it holden forth in the words, in that it is called *His Command*, as if he had no other command but this; (and the Greek Particle, is here prefixed, which hath a great Emphasis and Force in it, *Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐντολὴ αὐτοῦ.*) But

There is this also, the absolute necessity of this
 race, holden forth here in this word, *His Command-*
ment; as if he would have said, by proposing this com-
 mand, I do set life and death before you, and that ye
 could not conceive that it is an arbitrary and indiffe-
 rent thing for you to believe, or not: But be perswa-
 ded of this, that as an infinite advantage may perswade
 you to the obedience of it; so absolute necessity must
 perswade you to *Act* that which is of your everlasting
 concernment. And lastly, Ye have the precious Ob-
 ject upon which Faith (which is justifying) doth
 exercise itself, and that is upon the Name of the Son
 of God. And (no doubt) Faith is that excellent
 Grace, which doth elevate the Soul into a sweet and
 inseparable Union with Christ: and is that golden and
 precious Knot, that doth eternally knit the hearts of
 these precious Friends together. Faith is that Grace
 that draweth the first draughts of Christ's precious
 Image on our hearts, and by love accomplish and
 perfect them. Now Faith doth take hold, not only
 on the Faithfulness of GOD that he is a GOD of Truth,
 and that in him there is no lie: but likewise it taketh
 hold on the omnipotency of God, that he is one to
 whom nothing is too hard: and on the infinite mercy
 and love of God, that he is one who doth delight to
 magnifie this Attribute above all His Works, and these
 are the three great Pillars of justifying Faith. From
 the first, it answereth all these objections of Sence,
 which do ordinarily cry forth, *Doth his promise fail for-
 evermore?* And that with this one word, *If he hath
 once proposed it, he will also do it, and if he hath once
 spoken it, He will also make it come to pass.* From the
 second, it answereth all these Objections that may
 arise from carnal reason and probability, which tend
 to the weakness of his confidence. And these do of-
 tentimes cry out, *How can these things be?* But Faith
 layeth hold upon the Omnipotency of GOD, *is stag-
 gered not at the Promises, but is strong in the Faith,*
giving

giving glory to God. And it is the noble and divine exercise of this heroick Grace of Faith, that these Objections of Reason and Probability, which it cannot answer, it will lay them aside and yet close with the promise; which was the practise of believing *Abraham*, who considered not his own body being weak nor the barrenness of *Sarahs* womb. As likewise it was the commendable practice of that Woman, *Matth. 15.* Who not being able to answer the second Tryal of her Faith from Reason, yet notwithstanding Faith made her cry out, *Have mercy upon me, O Son of David.* And from the last, a Christian doth answer all the Arguments of Misbelief, which do arise from the convictions of our unworthiness and sinfulness, which makes us oftentimes embrace that Divinity of *Peters*, *Luk. 5. 8.* *Depart from me for I am a sinful Man.* But Faith taking hold on the infinite mercy and love of Christ, it answereth all with this. *He walks not with us according to that rule of merit, but according to that precious and Golden Rule of Love and boundless compassion.*

But before we shall speak any thing unto you of these things, we would a little point out some few things, to be known as previous to these, we shall not dwell long in pointing out the nature of justifying Faith: It is that grace whereby a Christian being convinced of his lost estate, and of an utter impossibility to save himself, he doth flee to the righteousness of *Jesus Christ*, and unto Him who is that precious City of Refuge, and there doth abide till our High Priest shall die, which shall not be for ever. Or if ye will, it is a sweet travelling of the Immortal Soul, betwixt infinite misery, and infinite mercy; betwixt an utter impossibility to save our selves, and a compleat ability in Him to save to the uttermost, betwixt abounding sin, and superabounding mercy: hence Faith is often holden forth to us in Scripture, under that notion of coming, *Isa. 35. 1.* *Ho everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,* *Rev. 22. 7.* *Whosoever will, let them take*

Opened up.

Take the Water of Life freely. Heb. 7. 25. Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come to God by him. And we may say by the way that if once a sinner could be brought to this, to count all his own righteousness but filthy rags, and to believe that a Man is as really justified before God by imputed righteousness, as if he were by inherent holiness; surely such an one were not far from the Kingdom of God. Neither shall we stand long to point out this unto you, that it is your duty to believe; for it is clear, not only from this Place, but likewise from Isa. 45. 22. Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth. Mat. 11. 28. Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Joh. 14. 1. Ye believe in God believe also in me. Isa. 55. 1. Ho every one that thirsteth, come to the waters, and he that hath no money, come buy without money, and without price. But O! its a great misery of many, (and that which may be a subject of perpetual lamentation) that we can neither be subject to the Law, as commanding to obey it, or be threatening to believe it: nor to the Gospel, as promising to embrace it, and sweetly to receive it. O! but that primitive Temptation and Delusion, whereby Satan did deceive our first Father, is that whereby he yet seeks to catch and delude many Souls, viz. That though we eat of the forbidden Fruit, and walk in the vain imaginations of our own hearts, yet he doth suggest this to us, that we shall not die, but shall once be as God; This is Satans great and deluding Divinity: and therefore, to enforce this great and precious Command a little further, we shall propose these considerations.

First, That the Gospel hath laid no obstructions in our way of closing with Christ, and partaking of the effects of the Gospel; but on the contrary sheweth that the great impediment is our want of willingness which we lay in our own way, as is clear from Joh. 5. 40. Ye will not come to me that ye may get life; as likewise from Revel. 22. 17. Where the Gates of the Gospel are

are cast open, *and whosoever will*, are commanded to enter in: So that although you may father your Misbelief upon your inability, or that your spot is not the spot of his People; yet know, that the rise and original of it, is want of willingness. But to make this more clear, we would have you all knowing this, that all the qualifications annexed to this Commandment of Faith, as that in *Matth. 11. 28.* speaketh out the qualifications rather of these that will come, than all these that ought to come: Or he inviteth these, that through the spirit of discouragement and misbelief, have the greatest reluctancy to come, and may not that cardinal and soul-refreshing promise, *John. 6. 37.* stop the mouth of misbelief, so that it should have nothing to say? *He that cometh unto me, I will in no ways cast out*; ye may reduce your misbelief rather to the sinfulness of your will, than to the sinfulness of your walk, and if once ye would come the length of willingness to embrace Jesus Christ, all other objections and Knors should be sweetly loosed and dissolved.

Secondly, Consider, that though we should pray the one half of our time, and weep the other, yet if we want this noble grace of Faith, the wrath of God shall abide on us. What are all the works of these Hypocrites, and these glittering acts of Law sanctification, but a plunging ourselves in the ditch, untill our own cloaths abhor us? Therefore it is, that after the Prophet *Zachary* hath made mention in the twelfth Chapter of his Prophecie, of making *bitter lamentation for him whom we have pierced, as for an only Son*; yet in the beginning of the 13. Chapter he maketh mention of a *Fountain opened to the house of David for sin and for uncleanness*; which may intimat unto us, that although we have waht our selves with our own Tears, yet there is use of the Blood of Christ, and that we must be washed in that Fountain, even for our own righteousness which are but as filthy rags.

Thirdly, Consider that great and monstrous sinfulness

ness that is in this sin of unbelief; we must strain at a Gnat, but we will easily swallow down this Camel: we will Tithe Mint and Annise, and fast twice in the Week, but neglect Faith, and Love, and Judgment, which are the weightier things of the Law. And indeed there are these things which speak out the sinfulness of Unbelief: 1. That when the Holy Ghost is sent to convince the World of sin, John 16. 9. He pitched upon this sin, as though there were no other sin, of which the world had need to be convinced, *He will convince the world of sin, because they believe not on the Son of God*: and no doubt there is more sinfulness in that sin, than in any branch of the Moral Law, it being a sin against a matchless Love, and against that which is the remedy of sin. 2. That it is called by way of eminency, disobedience, as is clear from Heb. 4. 11. *Lest any of you fall after the same example of unbelief*; or as the words may be rendered, *lest any of you fall after that example of disobedience*, Ephes. 2. 3, 4. That amongst all these that shall be eternally excommunicate from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, those that are guilty of this sin of unbelief, they are put in the first place, Rev. 21. 8. And, 4. That unbelief doth contradict and deny these three precious and cardinal Attributes of God; 1. Doth not unbelief contradict his faithfulness, and make him a liar? 1 John. 5. 1. 2. Doth it not contradict the infiniteness of his power? And, 3. The infiniteness of his Love, and supposeth that there is something too hard for him, which his power cannot reach, nor his infinite Love overcome? We may reduce many of our Questions and Disputings of his good will to this original, viz. to the disputings of his power. No doubt if we belong to him, we shall once sing that note of lamentation over our unbelief, *That is our infirmity for changes are from the right hand of the most High*. And lastly, to enforce this precious Command of Faith, consider that it is his Command which speaketh forth this, that we must not take an indulgence or dispensation to our selves to believe, or not to believe at our

our pleasure; and is it not a strange thing that Christians are less convinced of the breaches of the Commandments of Faith, than of other Commands? They think misbelief to be but a *Zoar* a little sin; and it proceedeth either from this, that the conviction of other sins (as the neglect of prayer, or the sin of swearing, or committing adultery) do arise from a natural conscience; for there is somewhat of nature's light to make us abominate and hate them: when yet the light of nature will not lead us to the convictions of the sinfulness of misbelief, it being a Gospel and more spiritual sin. Or it proceedeth from this, that unbelief doth ordinarily pass valid under the vizard of some refined virtue, as humility and tenderness, though that rather it may be said that it is pride and ignorance, cloathed with the garments of humility. And no doubt Christ doth account obedience to this Commandment of Faith the greatest act of humility, as is clear from *Rom. 10. 3.* where it is called submission; they submitted *not to the righteousness of God.* Or else it proceedeth from this, that we conceive that the Commandment of Faith is not of so large extent as other Commands, and so doth not bind us to the obedience of it; but know this, that it shall be the condemnation of the world, that they have not believed on the Name of the Son of God; and no doubt but it is Satans great design and cardinal project, to keep us back from obedience to the Commandment of Faith, and that we should not listen to the precious promises of this everlasting Gospel, but should reject the counsel of God against our selves, and refuse his precious and divine call.

The second precious consideration that we would give, shall be to shew you what are the causes that there is so much disputing of our interest, and so little believing; that we are so unstable as water, marring our own excellency, spending so much of our time in walking under a cloud, and are so seldom admitted to read our names in these Precious and Eternal records of Heaven? No doubt these things have influence upon it, viz. 1. That

we are more judging of God by his dispensations, than by his word, supposing ever the change of his dispensations to speak forth the change of our state; this is misbeliefs of divinity. That when sence cannot read love in His face, but he appeareth to frown, and to cast a Cloud over it, then it is Presumption (faith sence) to read love in his Heart, or in his word; but know it was a self-denying practice of believing Job to cry out, *Though He should kill me, I will believe in Him*; therefore make not dispensations your Bible; otherways ye will stumble at the noon tide of the day and shall halt in your way; know you never what such a thing as this meant, to ascend in overcoming thoughts of his love, notwithstanding any thing that his dispensations might preach? We conceive, that if the eyes of our Faith were opened, we might see infinite love engraven on the darkest acts, and most dismal like dispensations of his to us, though it be oftentimes written in dark and dim characters of sence.

2. There is this likeways which hath influence upon our so much disputing and misbelieving, viz. a guilty Conscience, and the intertainment of some predominant lust, which oftentimes occasioneth our walking in darkness and having no light: This is clear from 1 Tim. 2. 19. where that Precious Jewel of Faith can be holden in no other place, but in a pure Conscience, that is that Royal place wherein it must dwell; And no doubt if once we make shipwreck of a good Conscience, we will str. concerning our Faith. A bosom idol when it is intertained, doth exceedingly mar the vigorous exercise of these graces, which are evidences of our Faith, and certainly grace rather in its degrees, than in its sincerity or simple being only, is that which giveth the clear evidence of Faith. Therefore when we find not Love in its hight and eminent things, we hardly win to make it any way clearly concludung demonstration of our Faith.

3. As likewise, a bosom Idol, when it is entertained, maketh us to lose much of our high esteem and reputation of Jesus Christ; which doth exceedingly inter-

rupt

rupt the sweet and precious actings of Faith. For it is certain, that if once the immortal soul be united to Jesus Christ by the bond of love and respect, then our Faith will increase with the increase of God. Our intertainment of a bosom idol is ordinarily punished with the want of the sensible intimations of his grace, and our interest in him: so that sometimes his own are constrained to cry out, *God hath departed from me, and he answereth me not, neither by dreams nor visions.*

4. There is that likewise, that hath influence upon it, our not closing absolutely with Jesus Christ, but upon conditions and suppositions. We make not an absolute and blank resignation of our selves over unto Christ, to hold fast the Covenant, notwithstanding, he would dispendence both bitter and sad things to us; but we conceive that Christ's Covenant with believers is like that Covenant that God made with Noah, that there should be Summer and Winter, seed time and harvest, night and day unto a Christian. A Christian must have his night as well as his day: he must once sow in tears, before he reap in joy: he must once go forth, bearing his precious Seed, before he can return bearing his Sheaves in his bosom: and that this hath influence upon our instability, may be seen from this, that often a Christian after his first closing with Christ, he meeteth with desertion in point of tenderness, in point of joy, and in point of strength; so that his corruption seems now to be awakened more than formerly, that he wants those seeming enjoyments of him which formerly he had, and that much of his softness of heart hath now vanished, which is clear somewhat from Heb. 10. 32. *And after they were enlightened, they endured a great fight of affliction;* For the word that is there rendered afflictions, signifieth inward troubles through the motions of sin; as well as outward afflictions, Gal. 5. 24. And God useth to dispendence this way to his own, not only to take tryal of the sincerity of our closing with him, but to make our Faith more steadfast and sure. And no doubt, if we close not absolutely with Christ, (when under

Under these temptations and tryals) we must reject
our confidence as a delusion, and suppose it to be as a
morning dream : therefore it were a noble and divine
office of a Christian, to close with Christ without re-
vocation, seeing he doth dispence nothing burthat which
ought tend to our advantage. And we would say to
such as are under these temptations, that if ye endeavour
to resist them, it is the most compendious and excellent
way to make your hearts, which now are *dying as a
stone*, to be as a *watered garden*, and as *spring of water*,
whose waters faill not, and to make you *strong as a Lyon*, so
that no temptation can rouse you up ; but ye shall be
enabled to tread upon the high places of the Earth, and to
sing Songs of Triumph over your Idols.

5. There is this likewise that hath influence on it, our
building of our Faith more upon sence, than upon Christ
or his Word ; and therefore it is, that Faith is so in-
constant and changeable as the Moon, we not knowing what
such a thing meaneth, to hope against hope, and to be
strong in Faith giving glory to God. And we would only
say unto you that erect your confidence upon so sandy a
foundation, that when the wind and storm of Tempta-
tion shall blow, *that house shall fall to the Ground*. As like-
wise, building of your Faith upon sence, doth abate much
of your joy, and much of your precious esteem of Jesus
Christ ; it being Faith exercising it self upon an invisi-
ble Object, that maketh the Christian to *rejoyce with joy
unspeakable and full of glory*. 1 Pet. 1. 8.

6. There is this last that hath influence upon it, even
our slothfulness in the exercise of our spiritual Duties,
by which Faith should be entertained. Faith is a tender
Grace, and a plant that must not be rusted, but nourish-
ed through the sap of other precious Graces ; but we
grow remiss in our spiritual Duties, and do turn our
selves upon the Bed of Security, as the Door upon the
hinges. And doth not our drowsiness cloath us with
rags, and make us fall into a deep sleep : while as if
we were diligent, *our souls should be made fat and rich* ?
Yes, slothfulness doth not only impede assurance in
this,

this that it hindereth the divine communication of his love & respect by which Assurance may be kept on life Can. 5: 2. But also, it maketh our poverty come on us as an armed Man, and our want as one that travelleth: And withall it letteth loose the Chain by which our corruptions are tyed, and maketh them to lift up their heads, for which our Assurance is much darkned and impaired, and our hope is much converted into diffidence and despair. And we would only say this, it is the diligent Christian that is the believing Christian, and is the diligent Christian; there being such a sweet reciprocation betwixt these two precious graces, that they die and live together.

Now *Thirdly*, we shall shut up our discourse with this in pointing out a little, what are those things that do obstruct a Christians closing with Christ, and believing in his precious Name.

I. We conceive that this woful evil doth spring and rise from that fundamental ignorance of this Truth, that there is a God, as is clear from Heb. 11. 6. Where there is required as a qualification of a Comer, *That he should believe that God is*: And assuredly, till once this precious Truth be imprinted upon our souls, as with a pen of iron, and a point of a diamond, we will look upon the Gospel as an utopian fancy, and a deluding notion to teach unstable Souls who know not the way to attain unto real blessedness. And truly it is a fault in many, that they begin to dispute their being in Christ, before they know there is a Christ as to dispute their interest in him before his being, and that there is such an one as is called Christ.

II. Our coming unto Christ is obstructed from the want of the real and spiritual convictions of our desperate and lost estate without Jesus Christ, and that our unspeakable misery is the want of him, which is clear from, Jer. 2. 31. *We are lords, we will come no more to thee*. And it is evident from Rev. 3. 16, 18. that such a delusion as this doth overtake many, that they can reign as Kings without Jesus Christ; and that they can

ould their happiness, and establish their eternal felicity upon another Foundation. But O! that we could once *own* to this, to believe what we are without Christ; and to believe what we shall be in the enjoyment of him, with the one eye to discern and look upon these deep draughts that the mystery of iniquity hath imprinted upon our immortal souls, and withall to reflect upon the wages of sin which is death, and be constrained to cry, *Wo is me, for I am undone*: And with the other eye, to ascend and look to that help, that is *laid* upon *one that is mighty*, and to make use of the righteousness of a crucified Saviour, that so what we want in our selves, we may get it abundantly made up in him.

III. There is this likewise that obstructeth our closing with Christ, our too much addictedness to the pleasures and carnal delights of a passing world, which is clear from *Luke 14. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. Matth. 22: 5, 6.* where those that are invited to come to the feast of this Gospel, they do make their Apology, and with one consent do refuse it, some pretending an impossibility to come, and some pretending an unavoidable inconvenience in coming. And O! what a ridiculous thing is that poor complement, that these deluded sinners used to Christ, *I pray you have us excused*? And is not the world the great plea and argument that they make use of, when they will not come and make use of Christ?

IV. There is this lastly, which doth obstruct ones coming to Christ, their unwillingness to be denyed to their own righteousness, which is clear from *Rom. 10. 23.* And we conceive, if once these two were believed, (which are the great Topicks, out of which all these Arguments may be brought to perswade you to embrace Christ) to wit the infinite excellency of his person on whom we are to believe, and the infinite loss that those who sustain who shall be eternally rejected of him. We might be perswaded to entertain a divine abstractedness, and holy retirement from all things that are here below, and to pitch our desires alone upon him, *who is the everlasting wonder of Angels, and the glory of the higher house*

house. O! did we once suppose the unspeakable happiness of these, whose Faith is now advanced unto everlasting Felicity and Fruition, and hath entered into the eternal possession of the promises, might we not be constrained to cry out, *It is good for us once to be there*. Christ weepeth to us in the Law, but we do not lament and he pipeth to us in the Gospel, but we do not dance—he is willing to draw us with the cords of Men and with the bonds of Love, and yet we will not have him to remain over us. May not Angels laugh at our folly, that we should so undervalue this Prince of Love, and should condemn him who is holden in so high esteem and reverence in these two great assemblies that are above, of Angels, and of the spirits of just men made perfect? Christ hath now given us the first and second Summons, the day is approaching when the sad and woful Summons shall be sent against us, of departing from him into these everlasting flames, out of which there is no redemption: and this shall be the cape-stone of our misery, that we had once life in offer, but did refuse it: And though there were four gates standing open toward the North, by which we might have entered into that everlasting rest, yet we choose rather to walk in the paths, that lead down to death, and take hold of the chambers of hell. O! but there are many that think the Gospel cunningly devised fables and foolishness, (they being unwilling to believe that which sense cannot comprehend, nor reason reach) and this is the reason why the Gospel is not embraced, but is rejected as an humane invention, and as a morning dream, &c.

S E R M O N I I.

1 Joh. 3. 23. *This is his commandment that ye should believe on the Name of His Son Jesus Christ, &c.*

THere are three great and cardinal Mysteries in the unfolding of which, all a Christians time ought to

to be spent. First, There is that precious and everlasting Mystery of Christs love and condescendency : which those intellectual Spirits the Angels are not able fully to comprehend. Secondly, There is that wofull mystery of the desperat deceitfulness and wickedness of the heart, which no man was ever yet able to fathom and comprehend. And thirdly, there is that precious Mystery of that eternal Felicity and blessedness that is purchased unto the Saints, that once they shall reign with Christ, not a thousand years only, but throughout all the Ages of everlasting and endless Eternity : so that there is this difference betwixt this Garden of everlasting delight that Christ hath purchased to the Saints, and that first Paradise, and Eden wherein man was placed. There was a secret gate in the first, thorow which a man that had once entered in, might go out again. But in the second and precious Eden, there is no access for going out : And all that is to be known of these three Mysteries is much comprehended in this, to know that they cannot fully be known, *Paul* was a blessed proficient in the study of the first Mystery, and had almost attained to the highest Class of Knowledge, and yet he is constrained to profess himself to be ignorant of this. Hence is that word, *Eph. 3. 19. That ye may know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.* And is it not a mysterious Command, to desire People to know that which cannot be known ? The meaning whereof we conceive to be this in part, that *Paul* pressed this upon them, that they should study to know, that this Mystery of Christs love could not be known. *Jeremiah* was a blessed Proficient in the knowledge and study of the second Mystery ; he had some morning and twilight discoveries of that, and though in some measure he had fathomed that deep, yet he is constrained to cry out, Chap. 17. verse, *The heart is deceitfull above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it ?* And indeed that which *Solomon* saith of Kings, *Prov. 25. 3. may well be said of all men, in this respect : The heavens for height, and*

the Earth for depth, and the Heart of Man is unsearchable.
 The Apostle Paul also was a blessed proficient in the study of the third mystery, having some morning and twilight discoveries of the promised rest, and was once caught up to the third Heaven; and yet when he is beginning to speak of it, 1 Cor. 2. 9. He declares all men to be ignorant of the knowledge of this profound Mystery of mans blessedness, and cryeth out *Eye hath not seen, nor earheard neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him:* and if there be any thing further to be known of these Mysteries, the grace of Faith is found worthy, amongst all the graces of the Spirit, to open the seven Seals of these great depths of God. Is not the Grace of Faith, that whereby a Christian doth take up the invisible excellency and vertue of a dying Christ? Is not Faith that precious Grace, by which a Christian must take the Spots and Blemishes that are within himself? And is not the Grace of Faith that precious Grace that placeth a Christian upon the top of Mount Pisgah, and there letteth him see a sight of the Promised Land, and doth open a door in Heaven through which a Christian is admitted to see Christ sitting upon his throne? And Faith hath not only a kind of Omnipotency, as is clear, *That all things are possible to him that believeth,* but it hath a kind of Omniscieney, and all knowledge, that it can take up and comprehend all the great Mysteries of Heaven according to that word, Prov. 28. 5. *He that seeketh the Lord shall understand all things:* As if he had said, there is nothing dark to a believing Christian, as there is nothing impossible to a believing Christian. As like a wife, Faith is that Grace that must take aside the Veil that is spread over the Face of a crucified Christ. And Faith is that precious Spy, that goeth forth and taketh up these wonderful Excellencies that are in him. The Grace of Love as it were, is born blind, and it hath nothing wherewith to solace it self; but that which is presented unto it, by this noble and excellent Grace of Faith.

Now, before we shall speak any thing to these things, that we did propose to speak of at the last occasion: we shall yet speak a little unto some things, which are necessary to be known for the distinct up-taking of the nature of justifying Faith, which is the great Commandment of this everlasting Gospel; and that which we would first speak to, shall be this. What is the reason and ground, that the Gospel-conveyance of Righteousness and Life (and of the excellent things of this everlasting Covenant) should be through the exercise of the Grace of Faith? For it is not said in the Scripture, that Repentance justifieth, that Love justifieth, or that Mortification justifieth; but it is Faith only that justifieth, and it is Faith by which a Christian inheriteth the Promises: so that is clear, that Faith is that Conduit Pipe, through which are conveyed to us, the great Blessings of this everlasting Covenant.

I. And the first ground of it is this, it is through Faith that all our blessings may be known to be by love, and free and unsearchable grace, as is clear, Rom. 4. 16. While the Apostle is giving a reason, why the Inheritance is conveyed to a Christian through Faith; *It is of Faith* (saith he) *that it might be of grace*: For if the inheritance were conveyed to a Christian through the Covenant of Works, then these spotless Draughts of infinite Love and of unsearchable Grace, should not be written on our inheritance, as is clear, Rom. 4. 25. And it is that great design of Christ, to make his Grace conspicuous, in conveying Salvation to us through Faith.

II. There is this second ground likewise of it, that all the Promises and Blessings of this everlasting Covenant might be sure and steadfast to us, therefore they are conveyed to us through the exercise of the Grace of Faith; as is clear Rom. 4. 16. *They are of Faith* (saith he) *that they may be sure*: or as the word is, *that they might be settled*, when the promises of life and eternal salvation were conveyed to us through mans obedience,

dience, were they not then most uncertain and unstable : But is not Heaven your everlasting Crown now steadfast unto you, seeing you have that golden Pillar of Christ's everlasting Righteousness to be the foundation of your Faith, and the strength of your confidence in the day of need ?

III. There is this third ground why the promises and excellent things of this Gospel are conveyed to Christian through the exercise of Faith, that all boasting and gloriation might be excluded, according to that word, *Rom. 3. 27. By what law is boasting excluded? Not by the law of Works but by the law of Faith?* And certainly, seeing Christians have all the great things of Heaven conveyed to them through the exercise of Faith; think ye not, that this shall be your first song when ye shall be within the gates of the new Jerusalem? *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thee doth belong the glory of our salvation.* O what a precious dignity were it, but for one half hour to be admitted to hear these spotless Songs that are sung by these thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousand of holy Angels, that are round about His Throne? Doth not David that sweet singer of Israel, now sing more sweetly nor he did while he was here below? Doth not deserted Heman now chant forth the praises and everlasting songs of him that sitteth upon the Throne? And doth not afflicted Job now sing sweetly after his Captivity reduced, and he entered within that Land, where the voice of joy and gladness is continually heard : Would ye have a description of Heaven? I could not give it no term so suitable as this, Heaven is a rest without a rest, for though there remains a rest for the Righteous, yet *Rev. 4. 8. These four Beasts that stand before the Throne, they rest not night nor day, crying, holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty;* yet there is much divine quietness in that holy unquietness that is above.

IV. There is this last ground, why the blessings of the Gospel, and Life and Righteousness are conveyed to us through the exercise of Faith, that the way

to attain to these things might be pleasant and easie. We are certainly perswaded, that the way of winning to Heaven by a Covenant of Works, was much more unpleasant and difficult; but it is not an easie way of entering into the Holie of Holies, to win into it through the exercise of Faith. *Are not all Wisdoms ways pleasantness? Are not all her paths peace?* Was not that just self-denial in one that said, he would not take up a Crown though it were lying at his foot. But, Oh! that cursed self-denial doth possess the Breasts of many, so that though that Crown of immortal Glory and eternal Blessedness be lying at our feet, yet ye will not embrace it, nor take it up: Is not the hatred of many to Christ covered with deceit! And therefore your iniquities shall be declared before the Congregation.

Now that what we have spoken upon this, might be more clear, and that the Nature of justifying Faith be not mistaken, we would have you taking notice of these things.

I. That the Grace of Faith doth not justify a Christian, as it is a Work, or because of any inherent excellency and dignity that is in this Grace above any other Graces of the Spirit; but Faith doth alone justify a Christian, instrumentally, and objectively, that is, it is that by which a Christian is just, by laying hold on the precious Object of it, the Righteousness of Christ. And to clear this, we would only have you knowing this, that Faith doth justify as it closeth with Christ: but not because it closes with Christ, which some vainly are bold to assert, because there is not any dignity or worth in the Act of Faith in closing with Christ that can be the Foundation of our Justification, else it were to confound that precious Decree of Free Grace.

2. There is this that we would have you all knowing, that Faith is not the Instrument of Justification, (as Justification is taken in an active sense.) though it is the Instrument of Justification, as it is taken in a passive sense: and the ground of this conclusion is this,

because it is impossible, that any action in man, can be an Instrument in any action in God: And therefore that Phrase that you have so ordinarily spoken of, *That Faith justifieth*, it is thus to be resolved, *That we are justified by Faith*.

3. There is this that we would have you knowing, that betwixt a Christians closing by Faith with the Righteousness of Jesus Christ, and the Justification of a sinner, I say, there is no natural and indispensable connexion betwixt these two; but only there is a connexion of Divine appointment, and of Free Grace, though we conceive there is a natural aptitude in the Grace of Faith, to lay hold on the righteousness of Christ, more than there is in any other Grace of the Spirit: as ye may see, there is a more natural aptitude and fitness in the hand to receive, than in any other Organ of the Body.

4. There is this also that we would have you knowing, that is, a Christian in his first closing with Christ (considered as crucified) is the immediat object of his Faith and not Christ considered in his Personal Excellencies. Hence it is often in Scripture, that Christ as crucified, is holden forth as the immediat Object of justifying Faith, as is clear, *Rom. 3. 5, 24, 25.* And the ground of this Assertion is this, because that is the formal Object of justifying Faith, which doth formally justify the sinner, and on which Faith doth immediatly lay hold, as a ransom to satisfy Justice, and as a Righteousness in which the Soul dare venture to be found, when it shall stand before the Judgment Seat of God; And certainly, this is Christ, as obedient to the death of the Cross. And it is likewise clear, that the thing which doth engage the Soul to Christ, is not only because he is good in himself, but because he is good to us.

5. And there is this lastly, that we would have you knowing, That though Faith doth alone justify, yet Faith doth not justify being alone: Hence is that which we have so often in Schools, *Fides justificat solym,*

licet

liet non solitarie. That Faith Justifieth alone, though not being alone: as James doth speak, *Faith without works is dead, and is of none effect.*

Now that which secondly we shall speak to, shall be this: to point out to you some differences betwixt justifying Faith, which is in a real Believer, and temporary Faith, which is in an Hypocrite, and one that is destitute of that everlasting Hope, though he do pretend to have it.

And first, That there is such a thing as temporary Faith, is clear from *Luke 8. 13.* It is said there of some, *That they believed for a season*; yea, in *Acts 8. 13.* It is said of *Simon Magus*, (who was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity) *he believed.* And those in *Joh. 2. 23.* *When they did behold the miracles they believed on Jesus Christ.* and yet we perceive, that their Faith was not sincere, and so this was not saving Faith. And indeed ye may see a difference betwixt these two, in the very name *temporary*; for this is such a Faith, as doth not continue long with him that hath it, but doth evanish and pass away: for as this is certain, *that an hypocrite will not always call upon God,* *Job. 27. 10.* So that is also certain, that an Hypocrite will not always believe in God. I tell you, that the longest time that an Hypocrite doth keep his Faith, *Job.* hath set down in his 18. Chap. verse 14. *Their hope (saith he) shall bring them to the King of terrors, and then it shall be rooted out of them, and their Tabernacle;* their Faith will bring them no further than the gates of death, and then their Faith will flee away as a dream, and evanisheth as a vision of the night.

I I. There is this difference likewise betwixt them, that temporary Faith, it closeth with Christ as a Saviour, and for Righteousness; but it closeth not with Christ as a Prince, and for Sanctification; but justifying Faith taketh Christ as well for a Prince, as it taketh him for a Saviour: and if *Solomon* did discern who was the true Mother of the Child; by that, that she who would have the Child divided, was not the

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Mother

Mother of the Child; so we may say, that they who would divide Christ in his Offices, it is an evidence that they are not amongst those, who are actually made partakers of the Adoption of Children: there is somewhat of this pointed at in *Joh. 6. 66.* Where that which made many who were his Disciples (and did once believe) desert him, was because of the hardness of his Command, *this is a hard saying, who can hear it?* And it is certain, that it is a greater difficulty for a Christian to take Christ as a Prince than as a Saviour: for by that he must make an absolute Renunciation of himself over to Christ, never to be reduced. O! when saw you such a sight of Christ that you were constrained to cry out (without a complement) to him, *Truly, I am thy Servant, I am thy servant?* Or were ye never ravished with one of his eyes: nor overtaken with one Chain of his Neck? Believe me, they who see Him, do believe that his Commands are not grievous.

III. There is this difference, that temporary Faith is attained unto, without the exercise of the Law; but justifying Faith is not attained to without some measure of the exercise of the Law: This is clear, *Mark 4. 6.* Where speaking of these temporary Believers, it is said of them, *The Fruit immediately sprang up, &c.* Are there not some (it may be here) who think they do believe; and yet were never in any measure trembling under the discovering and condemning power of the Law? Is not that a Mystery, that one should bring forth without travelling? And is not this a mystery in Christianity that one should believe before he hath found the Pangs of the New-Birth? I am afraid of this, that many of us have taken up our Religion at our feet; for there are many that take up Religion before Religion take them up. But would ye know the Properties of a Christians Faith? *It is a begotten Faith,* *1 Pet. 1. 2.* and not a Faith that is taken up at our pleasure: And I would only say these two things to you; be persuaded of this, that Hypocrisie may be spun with a very

small threed : so that the most discerning Christian can not take up that desperate Enmity that is in them. How long did Judas lurk under the name of a Saint, even with those that were most discerning? And there is this that we would say, that among all those that shall be eternally excommunicate from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his Power, Hypocrites in Sion shall have the bitterest Cup of Divine Indignation presented unto them. Hence it is, that Christ when he would tell the worst company that one shall have in hell, it is always this, ye shall go to that place where Hypocrites and Sinners are : and so it would be of your concernment, that by the Candle of the Lord, ye would search the inward parts of the Belly, before ye go down to the Grave with a Lie in your right hand ; a deceiving heart having turned you aside. We confess it is sad to consider these anxious Disappointments that many in these days shall once meet with.

IV. But there is this last difference betwixt justifying Faith, and temporary Faith, That there are three precious effects of Justifying Faith, which a temporary Believer cannot win to.

1. To be denied to all his enjoyments and Attainments, and walk humbly under them, for we may say, that it is impossible for an Hypocrite to be denied to his enjoyments, he maketh such a Deity of them, and worships them, or rather he worshippeth himself in them. There are three great Graces that a Hypocrite doth pursue after, (though he rather seeketh them as Gifts than as Graces) Knowledge, Prayer, and Humility : And though it be but little that he can attain of any of the three, (or rather nothing in a saving way) yet least of all can he attain to the last ; yea, we may judge that there is always within his bosom a standing conviction, that he could never win to that grace of Humility. O ! could ye never win to this, to count your own righteousness as filthy Rags, and to rejoyce alone in the righteousness of a crucified Saviour. I would press this upon you by the way (O ! Christians of this Generation) forget your per-

fections, and remember your imperfections; have holy Oblivion of your Attainments, but have a Divine remembrance of your short-comings; look more to what is before unperfected, nor what is behind, and thus shall you evidence true justifying Faith.

2. It is an effect of justifying Faith, to be under some constant and Divine impression, of the preciousness of Jesus Christ, according to that word, 1 Pet. 2. 7. *To you who believe, Christ is precious*; It is not said, that Christ was precious, or shall be precious, but it is said, *He is precious*, which doth import, (as we use to speak) a continued act. Did ye never know what it was to dwell twenty four hours under the impression of the matchless excellency and precious worth of a crucified Saviour? I will pose you with this, are there not some here (and else where) that pass under the notion of Saints, that never knew what it was, to dwell half an hour under these high and elevating thoughts of the preciousness of Jesus Christ? So that we profess, we cannot tell whether we shall call him precious or undervalued; but we may conjoyn these two names together, that he is precious, and yet undervalued Christ.

3. By true justifying Faith, a Christian winneth to Mortification of his invisible and predominant Lusts, which is impossible for a temporary Believer to win to. And is there not a great difference betwixt an Idol when it is cast out, and an Idol when it goeth out? I will tell you the great Mortification of Hypocrites, the Devil was living in them, as one that was a black one, and now he cometh again and transformeth himself into an Angel of Light: he was living in them before, by the Spirit of Profanity, and now he liveth in them by the Spirit of Hypocrisie, and counterfeiting of these things that were never clear Attainments, while it is the noble dignity of Faith, Acts 15. 9. *To purifie the Heart*. But are there not many here, who never knew what it was to mortifie one lust for Christ? Can such a delusion overtake you, O Atheists! that

ye shall reign with Christ if ye die not with him? There is an Opinion vented in these days, that there may be repentance in Heaven, and I think it would seem, that the Christians of this Age have much of that Opinion, we are so little in Repentance while we are here below; but know, that Faith and Sanctification are two unseparable companions: And let me tell you, if ye would know the Compend of the precious exercise of Faith, it is this, Faith hath three great things that it perpetually contemplates and views. 1. Faith looketh to the Promise and there it doth rejoyce and rest upon it. 2. Faith looketh to the Duties that are commanded, and there it cryeth out, *Here I am I will obey and harken to the voice of thy word.* And 3. Faith looketh to the Crown, and there it doth exult and sweetly rejoyce in Divine expectations, And O! what a sight is that, to behold that everlasting Prince standing at the end of our Race, having a Crown in his right hand, with his Motto engraven on it, *He that persevereth to the end shall be saved?* And what a Faith suppose ye shall it be thought, when we shall get on that immortal Crown of Blessedness? What think ye is the exercise of these that are Above? O! Heaven, heaven. If we did know it, would we not be in an holy Extasie of desire, till we were there? And blessed be He eternally, that hath purchased that precious Felicity to us.

Now we shall at this time shut up our discourse, by speaking a little to these things in which a Christian doth ordinarily meet with assurance of his interest in God, and is put to the divine workings of the Grace of Faith, for there are some Sealing times to a Christian.

I. The first time of the Sealing is, after the mortification of some predominant Lust and Idol, when they are admitted to read their Names in these Precious and Ancient Records of Heaven, and to see (in these Books) their own unworthy Names written by the Hand of that everlasting Prince. This is clear,

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Rev. 2. 17. *To him that overcometh will I give a white Stone, and in it a new Name written, that no Man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it :* And from that, 2 Tim. 4.

8. Believe me, more Mortification, would make more believing ; but would ye know the Original of Mistake and Misbelief: It is the want of the exercise of spiritual Mortification of our Lusts. I know not where the most part of us intendeth to lodge at night, but this is certain, that we live with much contentment with our Lusts, and these predominant Idols, that do so much possess us.

II. It is readily a Sealing time to a Christian, when he is admitted to the divine Enjoyment of these satisfying delights that are to be found in Christ. When was it that the spouse cryed out so often. *My beloved is mine, and I am his?* Was it not when she was brought to the banqueting House, and his Banner over her was loved? Believe me, more Communion with an absent Christ would make more Intimation (in a divine manner) of our Peace with him. We desire to bless those that are above the reach of all these Disputings and Questions that we are so much subject unto.

III. This is a Sealing time to a Christian, when he is much in the exercise of secret Prayer, and of much conversing, and corresponding with God in that Duty, as is clear from that word in Dan. 9. 21. When Daniel was praying at the Evening Oblation, in the 3. 25: he meets with a divine intimation, that is peace with God. *Thou greatly beloved of God,* as the Original hath it, *O man of great desires,* for he was desireable indeed, and precious to him who holdeth the Saints in his right hand.

IV. This also is a sealing time to a Christian when he is called to the exercise of some great Work, and is to be put upon some eminent holy Employment ; this is clear, Jer. 1. 5. Where Jeremiah being called to preach the Gospel unto such a rebellious People, then he hath his eternal Election declared unto him; *before thou wast formed in the womb, I knew thee.* Christ, as it were

were giveth them that, to be meat to them for fourty days, and that in the strength of it they may go many a days Journey.

V. There is also another Sealing time, when a Christian is first begotten to a precious and everlasting hope: for when at first Christians begin to be acquainted with Christ, even then sometimes he declareth to them his boundless and everlasting Love. And this is the ground why some of these, who are but Babes in Christ, are so much in the exercise of Diligence, so much in the exercise of the Grace of Love, and so much in the exercise of the Grace of Tenderness, it is even because of the solemn Impression of their interest in Christ; that as it were, they are daily taken in to read their own Names in legible Letters in the Lambs Book of Life.

VI. And there is this last time, that is a Sealing time to a Christian, and that is, when he is put under some sad afflicting Dispensation: *When the furnace is hot seven times more than ordinary*: Then doth God condescend to manifest himself to his own. When was it that John met with most of the Revelations of Heaven? Was it not when he was in the Isle of Patmos for the Testimony of Jesus Christ's Kingdom, and patience of our blessed Lord? Revelation 1. 19. And in that place, 2 Cor. 4. 6. *Though our outward man decay, yet our inward man is renewed day by day.*

Now we would press you to be more serious in the exercise of this precious Grace. And I shall tell you the Compend of Christianity in these few words. 1. By Faith, to solace your selves in Christs invisible Vertues and Excellencies. And 2. By Hope, to be viewing that precious Crown, and these everlasting Dignities that are to be given to the Saints. And 3. By Mortification, to be crucifying your Idols. And 4. By Patience, to be possessing your Soules; untill once ye shall pass though that dark Land, to that Valley of everlasting Delight. And as for those that contemn and undervalue the Blood of this everlasting Covenant, (and I would have all those that delight not in

The Mystery of Faith,

not in closing with Christ, and these who have not misbelief as their Cross, to consider this) *The wrath of the living and eternall God, doth abide upon them who do not believe* : according to that word, Joh. 3. 36. *He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him* : it is a remarkable Phrase because of this, the wrath of God will not be as a Pilgrim to a misbeliever, that will turn aside to tarry but for a night, but the wrath of God (to them who will not believe) shall be their household Companion, and shall dwell with them : and wo, wo to them eternally, who have this sad and everlasting companion to abide with them, *the wrath of a living God*. There is one thing we would have these knowing, that amongst all these who are eternally debarred from Jesus Christ, Misbelievers are put in the foremost rank : Rev. 20. 8. There he is to put away *the fearfull and unbelieving* : And from 2 Thess. 1. 18, *When Christ shall come from Heaven with ten thousand of his Saints, (What to do ?) it is even so execute vengeance on those that obey not the truth of the Gospel* : That is, who do not believe. And I pose your own hearts with this, whether or not your names be written there in that Roll, among those who shall be cut off? And that word, 2 Thess. 2. 12. *That they might be damned who believed not, but took pleasure in unrighteousness*. O but the wrath of a dying Christ, and of a crucified Saviour, is dreadful ! It is more sad and terrible, than the wrath of God should have been if Christ had not died. I will tell you (O Hypocrites in Zion) the worst news that ever was published in your ears, and it is this, Christ died and rose again, and to those that are begotten to a lively Hope, they are glad Tidings of great Joy, (and therein they may comfort themselves) but ye may wear a rough Garment to deceive, and go to Heaven in your own apprehension : But O ! the sad disappointment that is waiting on many such. And to close with this, we would obtest you, as ye would answer to your terrible and dreadful judge, that shall stand one day upon his

His Throne, which he shall fix in the Clouds, we obtest you by all the Joys of Heaven, and we obtest you by all the everlasting Pains of Hell, and we obtest you by all the Curses that are written within the Volume of this Book, and by all the sweet and comfortable Promises that are in this everlasting Gospel, and by the Love that ye owe to your Immortal Souls, and as ye would not crucifie Christ afresh, believe, and embrace the offers that are presented now unto you. Know ye whether or not this shall be the last Summons that ye shall get to believe? That so, if ye do reject it, Christ shall come from Heaven, and pronounce that sad and lamentable Sentence unto you, *Depart from me ye cursed, I know you not.* Now to him that can bless these things to you, we desire to give praise.

S E R M O N I I I.

1 John. 3. 23. *This is his Commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ.*

IT was a Command that Solomon gave unto his Son, Prov. 22. 26. *That he should not be surety for Debt, nor should be one of those that striketh hand; But, O! what spotless Breaches of that Command hath our blessed Lord Jesus committed, when he did condescend to be surety for our Debt, and to pay that was impossible for us to satisfy? Hath not Christ made a precious Exchange with sinners? He wreathed about his own precious neck, that Bond and Yoke of our Iniquities, and hath given to us that unweariable Ease, and portable Yoke of his Commandments; among which this is one, That we should believe on him, Spotless Christ was made sin for us, that sinful we, might be made the righteousness of God in Him: And is not this the condemnation of the World, that we will not believe in Him? that we will not delight our selves in loving of him. And I would say this to you, that though you would weep*

the one half of your days, and pray the other half. Yet, if ye want this Noble Grace of Faith, *Your Righteousness shall be but like a menstruous Cloath, and filthy Rags before him*: For what is Praying without believing but a taking of his Blessed Name in vain? What is conferring upon the most Divine and precious Truths of God, without believing? Is it not a lying to the Holy Ghost, and a flattering of God with our Mouth? And we would have you knowing this, that there is a sweet Harmony that is now made up betwixt *Moses* and *Christ*, betwixt the Law and the Gospel. The Law bringeth us to *Christ* as a Saviour, and *Christ* bringeth us back again to the Law to be a Rule of our walk, to which we must subject our selves. So, then would ye know the compend of a Christians walk? *It is a sweet travelling betwixt Mount Sinai and Mount Sion, betwixt Moses and CHRIST, betwixt the Law and the Gospel.* And we conceive that the more deep that the exercise of the Law be in a Christians Conscience before his closing with *Christ*, there is so much the more precious and excellent advantages waiting for him.

I. There is this advantage that waiteth on the deep exercise of the Law: that it is the way to win to much establishment in the Faith, when once we begin to close with *Christ*. O Christians, would ye know that which maketh the Superstructure and building of Grace to be within you, *as a bowing wall, and as a towering fence*? (So that oftentimes ye are in hazard to raze the Foundation) it is this, ye were not under the exercise of the Law before your believing in *Jesus Christ*. There are some who do not abide three days at *Mount Sinai*, and these shall not dwell many days at *Mount Sion*.

II. There is this advantage that waiteth on the deep exercise of the Law: it maketh *Christ* precious to a mans Soul. What is that which filleth the Soul of a Christian with many high and excellent thoughts of *Christ*? Is it not this, to have the Law

registrating our Bond, and putting us (as we use to speak) to the Horn, that is to have the Law cursing us, and using the Sentence of Condemnation against us, That which maketh us to have such low and undervaluing thoughts of precious Christ, is, because the most part of us are not acquainted with the deep and serious exercise of the Law: that is a Mystery to the most part of Christians Practice. Ye know that there were four Streams which went out from the Paradise of God, into which man was first placed: And so we may say, that there are four golden Streams, by which lost and destroyed men are brought back again to this *Eden and Paradise* of everlasting delights. First, there is the precious stream of Christs righteousness, by which we must be Justified. And secondly, There is that stream of his Sanctification, by which we must be purified. Thirdly, there is that stream of the Wisdom of Christ, by which we must be conducted through this Wilderness wherein we have lost our way. And fourthly, There is the stream of Christs Redemption, by which we must be delivered from the power of our enemies, and must turn the Battel in the Gate. It is by the Redemption of Christ, that we shall once sing that triumphant Song, *O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?* O! but all these streams will be sweet and refreshing to a Soul that is hotly pursued by the Law, so long as we see not the ugliness of our Leprosie in the Glass of the Law, we have our own *Abana* and *Parphar*, that we think may do our turn; but when once our case is truly laid open to us, then we will be content to wash our selves in *Jordan* seven times.

III. There is this advantage that waiteth on the deep exercise of the Law, that it maketh a Christian live constantly under the impression of the sinfulness of sin. What is it that maketh sin exceeding sinful to a Christian? Is it not this, he hath been forty days in *Moses* Schoole? And we conceive that the ground why such Fools as we, make a mock of sin,

because we know not what it is to be under the power of his Wrath, and the apprehensions of the Indignation of God.

But now to come to that which we intend to speak of: We told you, that the first occasion that we spake upon these words, that there were many excellent things concerning the Grace of Faith, holden forth in them. The first thing (which was holden forth concerning this radical Grace of Faith) was the infinite advantage that redoundeth to a Christian through the exercise of Faith, and giving obedience to this command: which we cleared to be holden forth, not only from the scope, but also from the nature of this Command. And now to speak a little to the point, we shall propose these considerations, that may abundantly shew how advantageous a thing this excellent Grace of Faith is?

I. The first consideration that speaketh it, is this, That Faith maketh Christ precious to a Soul, according to that word, 1 Pet. 3. 7. *To you that believe, Christ is precious.* And we would have you knowing this, that Faith maketh Christ more precious to a Soul, nor Sense, or any other thing can make him. And first, Faith maketh Christ more precious nor Sense, because the estimation which the Grace of Faith hath of Christ, it is builded upon the excellency of his Person: but the estimation of Sense, it is builded upon the excellency of his actions: so that because he is such to them, therefore they love and esteem him. But that heroick Grace of Faith, it taketh up the excellency of Christs person, and that maketh him precious to them. Secondly, Faith maketh Christ more precious than Sense, because Sense looketh to that love which Christ manifesteth in his face, and in his hands, and in his feet: but Faith looketh to that Love which is in his Heart. Sense will cry forth, *Who is like to thee? whose countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the Cedar: whose hands are as Gold-rings, set with Beryl, and whose legs are like pillars of Marble, set in Sockets of Gold.* Sense will look to the

the smilings of Christ, and will wonder; it will look to his Dispensations and Actings, and will be constrained to cry out, *Who is like unto thee?* But the Grace of Faith, solaceth it self in the Fountain from whence all these springs and sweet inundations of Love do flow. Thirdly, Faith maketh Christ more precious than Sense; because Faith looketh not only to what Christ is presently, but unto what Christ is from eternity before time, and what Christ shall be unto eternity after time, but Sense only doth look to what Christ is presently. And ye must conceive, that the sweet Travellings of Faith betwixt infinite Love from eternity before, and infinite Love unto eternity after, must make Faith to fall in a Sea of wondering and raiseth the thoughts to the highest pitch of desire and estimation. Fourthly, we may likewise add, that the Impression of the preciousness of Christ, which Sense maketh upon the Soul, is not so constant, nor so single, as that which Faith doth make. O but the Grace of Faith giveth the Christian a broad look to Christ, and letteth him see Christ clothed with Ornaments of Glory and divine Majesty. Sence followeth Christ rather that it may see his Miracles, and Love, and that it may be fed with Loaves; but Faith follows Christ, for himself above all.

II. The second Consideration, to speak the advantage of it, is, that the Grace of Faith, it hath, as it were, an arbitrary power with God: so that *whatsoever a Christian shall seek in Faith, he shall receive it.* It is the noble Gift that was once given to Faith, that it should never seek anything and be denied, according to that Word in *Matth. 21. 22. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in Prayer, believing ye shall receive it.* And that word in *Joh. 15. 7. Abide in me, that is, believe; and the promise is annexed to this: Whatsoever ye shall ask ye shall receive.* And it is clear likewise from the preceeding verse to our Text, that if we obey this Command of Faith; *Whatsoever we shall ask of God, we shall receive it.* And I would speak these two things

things to you from this; First, that oftentimes Christ putteth a Blank in a Christians hand, who is much in the exercise of Faith, according to that in *Matthew*. 20. 32. Is there not an ample Blank put into that Mans hand? *What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?* Christ desireth him to fill up that blank with what he would. And secondly, there is this, which is one of the greatest Steps of Christs matchless condescendency, that oftentimes when his own have sought in their presumption a Blank to be put in their hand, Christ condescendeth to give it, according to that strange passage in *Mark*. 10. 35, 36. the two disciples who presented this desire to Christ, We desire say they, *that whatsoever we ask, thou should give it unto us.* And presently that is answered, *What will ye that I should do for you?* Christ hath an infinite good will to satisfy the desires of his own: and that which yet more speaketh out Christs boundless good will to satisfy the desires of all that belong to him, it may be cleared in that word, *John*. 16. 24. where he charges his Disciples with this: *Hitherto, saith he, have ye asked me nothing;* ye must not suppose that *Peter, James and John* never sought a suit of Christ: but the meaning of that expression is this: Ye sought nothing in comparison of that which I was willing to give, and which your necessity did call for at my hands, which ye should have sought.

III. There is this third consideration, to point out the advantage of Faith: It is that grace that keepeth all the Graces of the Spirit in Life and Exercise, Faith is that higher Wheel, at the motion of which, all the lower wheels do move: If so we may speak, Faith is that *primum Mobile*, that first moves and turns about all the lower Graces of the Spirit, according to that, *2 Pet.* 1. 5. *Add to your Faith, Virtue, and to your virtue, Patience, and to your patience brotherly Kindness.* First, the Grace of Faith keepeth in exercise the Grace of Love, as is clear, *Ephesians* 3. 17. Where these two Graces are subjoyned. As likewise from *Rom.* 5. 1. compared with *verse* 5. *Being justified by Faith, Then*
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this effect foloweth upon it, *The love of God it is shed abroad in our own hearts.* And so it is certain, that Faith keepeth Love in Life. Faith being the spy of the Soul, and that Intelligencer and precious Messenger: It goeth out and bringeth in Objects unto Love, Faith draweth aside the Vail, and Love sitteth down and solaceth it self in the Discoveries of Faith. Secondly, the Grace of Faith likewise it keepeth the Grace of Mortification in exercise, as is clear, not only from *Ephesians 6. 6.* but from *1 Joh. 5. 4.* *This is our Victory whereby we overcome the World, even our Faith.* And it is certain that Faith keepeth Mortification in exercise, and advanceth Holiness, not only because of this, that Faith is that Grace that presenteth to a Christian, the absolute purity and spotless holiness of Jesus Christ; but also because it maketh them esteem their Idols tasteless, as the white of an Egg, and they become unto them as their sorrowful meat. The best principle of Mortification is this, the discoveries of the invisible Vertues of Jesus Christ: that Mortification which ariseth from the lovely discoveries of the Excellencies of Jesus Christ, is most real and abiding; as these waters which rise from the highest Springs, are not only constant, but likewise most deep and excellent. Thirdly, Faith likewise hath influence upon mortification, as it doth take hold of that infinite strength that is in Christ, by which a Christian is enabled to mortifie his corruptions. Fourthly, Faith likewise maketh application of the Blood of sprinkling, by which we are purified from dead Works. Fifthly, Likewise the Grace of Faith keepeth in exercise the Grace of Humility, as is clear, *Rom. 3. 27:* By what Law, saith he, is boasting excluded? It is not by the Law of works, but by the Law of Faith. Sixthly, Faith keepeth in exercise the Grace of Joy, as is clear, *Rom. 15. 13:* Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing. So that ye see the proper fruit of Faith, is Joy in the Holy Ghost. And certainly did we believe more, we should rejoyce more

more. Seventhly, and lastly, Faith keepeth in exercise the Grace of Hope, for it is impossible for Hope to be in lively exercise, except Faith once be exercised, which may be a shame unto you; for how can we hope to attain the thing that is promised, except our Faith first close with the Promise? So there is this difference betwixt the Grace of Faith, and the Grace of Hope; the Grace of Faith closeth with the Promises; but the Grace of Hope, it closeth with the thing that it Promised.

IV. There is this fourth Consideration, that may speak out the excellency of the Grace of Faith, it is that Grace by which a Christian doth attain to most divine fellowship, and constant correspondency with Heaven. Would ye have that question resolved and determined, What is the best way, *Not to stir up our beloved, nor awake him till he please?* It is this, be much in the Grace of Faith: this is clear, from Eph. 3. 17. *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by Faith:* By the exercise of all other Graces, Christ is but a sojourner, *That turneth aside to tarry but for a night;* but by the exercise of this Grace, he cometh to take up house with us. I will tell you what Faith is, it is a Ladder that reacheth between Heaven and Earth; by the Steps of which a Christian doth dayly go up to Heaven and converse with the Higher House; Faith is that Grace (as the Apostle speaketh) by which we have access to the Throne of his Grace. Faith ushers in the Believer to the Throne: and without it he cannot have access there, nor joy when he is there.

V. Here is this advantage that attendeth the exercise of Faith. A believing Christian is a praying Christian: according to that Word in Mark 9. 24. where these two are conjoynd together, *Lord, I believe: and then he falleth to his prayer presently after that confession, Help thou my unbelief.* And it is clear from Psalm 63. 1. *O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee, my Soul thirsteth for Thee!* And sometimes Faith is a most impatient Grace: but we may always say of it, that it is

is a most diligent Grace. Oh ! is it not the neglect of this precious exercise of Faith, and of the duty of secret Prayer, that makes our leanness testifie to our face, and maketh our Souls a barren Wilderness ? I am perswaded of this, that since Christ had any followers, and since ever this everlasting Gospel was preached in Paradise, the exercise of secret Prayer was never so much neglected. We have turned over all our Prayers into complements with God. We know not what it is *to rise at midnight and call upon God, and to enquire after our Maker under the silent watches of the night.* O ! but it is a sweet diversion from sleep, to retire our selves (in the silent seasons of the night) from all thoughts about worldly matters, and to converse with that invisible Majesty.

VI. There is this sixth consideration to point out the advantage of Faith : That Faith is that Grace that doth facilitate a Christians obedience, and maketh it most pleasant and easie : This is clear from Heb. 1.8. *By Faith Abraham when commanded to go to a strange land, obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went.* The word may be rendered ; *He did cheerfully obey.* And verse 17. *By Faith he offered up his only Son.* Would ye know the reason why his Commands are your burden, and why his Precepts are your Crosses ? It is because of this, *Ye do not believe :* And so it is most certain, that it is impossible for a Christian to attain to a pleasant way of obedience, without the exercise of Faith. Faith holdeth up the Crown to a Christian, and his Crown maketh him to obey. Faith gathereth strength from Christ, and that strength maketh Obedience very easie. Faith taketh up the excellency of Christ, and this maketh a Christian to look upon his duty, more as his dignity than his duty. And we are perswaded of this, that our Chariot-wheel should move more swift- (*like the Chariots of Aminadab.*) If we were more in the exercise of the Grace of Faith. Would ye know an answer to that question, What is first most requisite for a Christian while here below ? Faith. And what

what secondly is most requisite? Faith. And what thirdly is most requisite for a Christian? Even Faith. Faith above all things, and above all things, Faith.

VII. There is another advantage of it, that by Faith our Service and Prayers are accepted of God. Would ye know what is the Prayer of a Christian that is not in Faith? *It is a smoke in his nostrils, and a fire that burneth all the day. The unbelievers sacrifice is an abomination to the Lord.* This is clear from Heb. 11. 4. By Faith Abel offered up unto God a more acceptable Sacrifice than Cain; and we conceive that there are many unanswered prayers which we do put up, because we want that noble exercise of Faith.

VIII. And lastly, we shall likewise add this, that Faith is that Grace by which a Christian hath that perfect and immediate sight (as is were) of great things that are promised to him; Faith bringeth a Christian within sight of Heaven, and Faith bringeth a Christian within sight of God, according to that word, Heb. 11. 1. *Faith is the evidence of things not seen:* And that noble paradox, that is said of Faith, Heb. 11. 27. *By faith Moses saw Him that is invisible.* Is it not an impossible thing, to see that which cannot be seen? But the meaning of it is this, That Faiths discoveries of God, are as certain and sure, as the discoveries of our bodily eyes are: Faith is an intelligent Grace; yea, it is a most sure and infallible Grace; What will Faith not do? And what can ye do who want Faith?

Now to enforce the advantages and excellencies of Faith a little more, we shall propose to you the disadvantages of that woful sin of unbelief.

I. There is this disadvantage of the sin of unbelief, that all the actions that proceed from an unbeliever, they are impure and defiled, according to that in Tit. 1. 15. *But unto them that are defiled, and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. Their prayers are unclean: yea, (as Solomon speaketh) their plowing is sin: yea, their going about the most excellent*

lent duties (for matter) is an abomination to God, according to that Word, *Rom. 14. 23. Whatever is not of Faith, is sin.* So the want of Faith is the great polluter of all our actions, and of all our performances.

II. There is this second disadvantage of misbelief, that it is impossible for one in the exercise of unbelief, to mortifie a lust or Idol: and we may allude unto these words in *Matthew 17. 20.* When his Disciples came to Him, and asked this Question, *Why could we not cast out this devil?* That was given as an answer, *because of your unbelief.* Unbelief is that which taketh up arms for our idols; and doth most strongly defend them: for there is nothing that will kill corruption so much, as the exercise of Faith: and when all this is laid aside, we have laid by our weapons, and have in a manner concluded a treaty of Peace with our Idols, that we shall not offend them, if they offend not us.

III. There is this disadvantage that waiteth upon the sin of unbelief, that such an one cannot win nor attain to the Grace of Establishment, but is always as the waves of the Sea, tossed to and fro, until once he win to the exercise of Faith, as is clear from *1 Jai. 7. 2.* *Except ye believe, ye shall not be established.*

IV. There is this disadvantage that waiteth on it; it is the Mother of hardness and stupidity of Heart, according to that word in *Mark 16. 14.* Where he upbraideth them because of their unbelief: and then what danger followeth? to wit, *hardness of Heart*: this is clear also from *Acts 19. 9.* Where these two sister devils are so conjoynd and locked together, *unbelief and hardness of Heart*, because it is unbelief indeed, that hindereth all the Graces by which the Grace of Tendernefs must be maintained.

V. There is this disadvantage in the Sin of unbelief, that it is big with Child of Apostacy from God, and of defection from him, according to that Word, *Heb. 3. 11. Beware lest there be in any of you, an evil Heart of unbelief (and there the fruit of it) to depart from*

the living God) And certainly it is no wonder, that unbelief travel in Birth, till that cursed Child of Apostacy be brought forth; not only because of this, that an unbeliever loseth the thoughts of the excellency of Christ, but also because he increaseth in his thoughts of love towards his Idols: for Christ doth decrease in those who misbelieve, and their Idols do increase in their love, and in their desires, and in the estimation.

VI. There is this sixth disadvantage in the sin of unbelief, it hindereth the communication of many signal workings and tokens of the Love and favour of the most High, according to that sad word that is in *Mat. 13. 58.* at the close, *He could not do many mighty Works there because of their unbelief.* Unbelief, as it were laid a restraint on Christ, that he could not effectuate these things which he was willing to perform: And (to shut up our discourse at this time) I would only add these two aggravations, which may somewhat enforce what we have spoken; (I say) there are these two aggravations in the sin of unbelief, even in his own who have a right (and also his call) to believe. 1. That after Christ hath given most sensible discoveries of himself, wherein ye have seen him, as it were, face to face, yet ye will not believe: this is clear from *Joh. 6. 36.* *Though ye have seen me, saith Christ, yet ye do not believe in me.* There is not a manifestation of Christs presence, but it is a witness against you, because of your unbelief. Would ye hear the voice of sense, that is rectified? It is this, believe on the Son of God. Secondly, That notwithstanding of the signal demonstrations of the power of Christ, yet, though it were the mortifying of some Lust and Idol within them, yet they will not believe, but upon new temptations will doubt of His Love to them. Christ preacheth Faith by His Word, He Preacheth Faith by His Sufferings, He Preacheth Faith by his Dispensations, He Preacheth Faith by His Promises, He Preacheth Faith by His Rods; and if these five instruments will not

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engage your Hearts to believe, what can move them? Do not his two wounds in his Precious Hands, Preach out this point of Faith, believe him: Doth not that hole opened in His Side Preach this Doctrine, *That we should believe in him?* And these two wounds, that he received in his Precious Feet, do they not Preach this, *That we should believe on a crucified Saviour?* And we would only say this, that sometimes it is the case of his own, that after the convictions of this, that it is their duty to believe, and also after some desires to close with Christ, yet they find inability to close with Him. Is it not certain that to will (*to believe*, is sometime present with you? but how to perform ye know not. And I would have a Christian making this fourfold use of such a Dispensation as that, (which is most ordinary) when convictions of our duty to believe and some desires to close with Christ, is not followed with actual performances.

1. To study to have your Convictions more deeply rooted within you; for it doth sometimes follow, that resolutions and mints to believe, are not blest with actual believing; because the conviction of our duty to believe; is not deeply imprinted upon our Conscience.

a. Be convinced of that desperate enmity (*and that mystery of iniquity*) that is within you, that ye can have some will to do, without ability to perform, we confess it is not an ordinary disease in these days, to have such a contrariety betwixt a Christians Will and his Practice, our will for the most part being no better than our Practice; But sometime it is, which may make you cry forth, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of Death.*

2. That ye would be much in the imploying of Christ, that as he hath given you to will, so also he might make you to do. Christ is about to convince his own in such a dispensation as that, *That Faith is the gift of God.* Faith is so noble a Grace, that it cannot be spinned out from our resolutions, nor from

our endeavours; Faith is such a divine plant, as the Fathers right hand must plant in our Souls.

4. Let it convince you of the excellency of the Grace of Faith (for the difficulty of attaining to any thing, may speak out the excellency of that thing) there is no sin but it may be easily win at; There is an easiness and facility to overtake the paths of our idols: but the Graces of the Spirit are so excellent things, that we must fight before we attain them; and you who are strangers to Christ Jesus (and have never known what it is to close with him) we would request you in Christs Name, to be reconciled to Him. What know ye, O men, (or rather Atheists) but this shall be the last summons that ye shall get to believe? And because ye disobey this precious Summons, there shall be one presented to you that ye cannot sit. I remember of one man, who looking upon many thousands that were under his command, weeped over them, when he considered how that within a few years all these should be laid in their graves, and should be in eternity. O but it were much of our concernment, to be trying our selves how it is with us. We are not afraid that it is a breach of charity, to wish that but one of each ten that are within these doors, were Heirs of the Grace of Life, and had the solid and spiritual expectation of Heaven. I think if Christ were to come presently to speak to us, he might not only say to each twelve that are here, *One of you shall betray me*: but we are afraid that he would say to each twelve that are here, *Eleven of you shall betray me, and but one only shall pass free*. O doth it not concern you, to enquire where you shall rest at night, when the long shadow of the everlasting evening shall be stretched out upon you? I think there are some that are so settled upon their lees, that if they were one day in hell, and saw all the torments that are there, and were brought from it the next day to live on Earth, they would not repent. And more, there are some, that take them up one day

to see the Joys of Heaven, and bring them back again, they would not pursue after these blessed and everlasting enjoyments. O is not Christ much undervalued by us? But I must tell you this, *One wo is past, but behold another wo is fast coming.* O! the screeching of these Spirits that art entered into their everlasting Prison house, out of which there is no Redemption. What shall be your choice, when Christ shall come in the Clouds? I am perswaded, there are many, to whom at that day, this Doctrine would be ravishing; viz. *That there were not a Death, that there were not a God, and that there were not an eternity.* Oh! will ye believe, *that the sword of the Justice of God is sheathed in Heaven, and shall come down to make a sacrifice; not in the Land of Idumea, nor in the Land of Bozra; but he is to make a sacrifice among his People who seemed to make a Covenant with him by sacrifice.* Ah, ah, shall we say that? If that argument were used to many, that within forty days they should be at their long and everlasting home, they would yet spend thirty nine of these days in taking pleasure upon their lusts. I am perswaded of this, that there are many who think that the way betwixt Heaven and Earth, is but one days journey; they think they can believe in one day, and triumph at night: But O! it shall be a short triumph that such Believers as these shall have. Therefore, O study to close with a crucified Saviour, rest on him by Faith, delight your selves in him with love, and let your souls be longing for the day when that voice shall be heard in Heaven, (and O how sweetly shall it be sung?) *Arise, arise, arise, my Love, my Dove, my Fair One, and come away: for behold your winter is past, your everlasting summer is come, and the time of the singing of birds is near: When Christ shall come over these mountains of Beiter, he shall cry, Behold Leona; and the Soul shall sweetly answer, Come blessed Lord Jesus, Come, O what a life shall it be: that with these two*

arms ye should eternally incircle Christ, and hold him in your arms, or rather be incircled by him? *Wait for him, for he shall come, and his reward is with him, and he shall once take home the wearied travellers of hope.*

S E R M O N I V.

1 John 3: 23. This is his commandment, that ye should believe in the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, &c.

THere are two great and excellent Gifts, which God in the deep of his boundless love hath bestowed on his own. First, There is that infinite Gift and Royal Donation, his own beloved Son Jesus Christ, which is called, *The gift of God, Job. 4. 10.* And secondly, There is that excellent Gift of the Grace of Faith, which God hath bestowed upon his own, which is also called, *The gift of God, Ephes. 1. 6. Faith is the gift of God.* And is it not certain, that these two gracious Gifts ought to engage our Souls and Hearts much unto him? Infinite Majesty could give no Gift greater than His Son, and Infinite Poverty could receive no other Gift so suitable as Christ: It was the most noble gift that Heaven could give, and it in the greatest advantage for earth to receive it. And we could wish that the most part of the study and practice of men (that is spent in pursuit of those low and transient Vanities) might be once taken up in that precious pursuit after Christ: We could wish that all the questions and debates of the time were turned over into that Soul-concerning question, *What shall we do to be saved?* and that all the Questions, Controversies, and Contentions of the time were turned over into that divine Contention and Heavenly Debate, *Who should be most for Christ, who should be most for exalting of the noble and excellent plant of renown, and that all our judging and searchings of other*

other mens practices and estate, might be turned over into that usefull search, to prove and examine our selves whether we be in the Faith or not. And I would ask you this question, what are your thoughts concerning precious Christ, seeing he is that noble Object of Faith? We would only have you taking along these things, by which Christ may be much commended to your Heartes. First, There was never any that with the eyes of Faith did behold the matchless beauty and transcendent worth of that crucified Saviour, that returned his enemy. There is Soul conquering vertue in the Face of Christ, and there is a Heart-captivating, and overcoming power in the beauty of Jesus Christ. This first sight that ever persecuting Soul got of Christ; it brought him to an endless Captivity of Love. Secondly, There is this that we would say of precious Christ, which may engage our Souls unto Him, that for all the wrongs Believers do to Christ, yet hath He never an evil word of them to His Father, but commends them: which is clear from that of John 17. 6. where Christ doth commend the Disciples to the Father for the Grace of Obedience, *They have kept thy word*: and for the Grace of Faith, verse 8. *They have believed that thou didst send me*: And yet were not the Disciples most defective in Obedience, both in this, *That they did not take up their Cross and follow Christ*: and also in that, they did not adhere to Him in the day that he was brought to Caesars Hall? and were they not most defective in the Grace of Faith? as is clear from *Matthew 17. 17.* and likewise from *John. 14. 1.* He is pressing them to believe in Him, and yet he doth commend them to the Father, as most perfect in these things. Thirdly, There is this that we would say of him who is that noble object of Faith, look to the eminent deaps of Christs condescendency, and then ye will be provoked to Love Him. Was it not infinite Love that made Christ to ly three dayes in the Grave, that we might be through

all the ages of Eternity with Him? Was it not Infinite Condescendency that made His precious Head wear a Crown of Thorns, that we might eternally wear a Crown of Glory? Was it not infinite condescendency that made Christ wear a Purple Robe, that so we might wear that precious Robe of the Righteousness of the Saints? And was it not matchless condescendency, that Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, and like unto us, that so we might become like unto Him, and be made the Righteousness of God in him.

But to come to that which we intend mainly to speak unto at this time, which is that second thing we proposed to speak of from these words: and that is concerning the excellency of this Grace of Faith, which we cleared, was holden out in that, that Faith was called his Commandment, which is so called by way of eminency and excellency. There are many things in Scripture, which may sweetly point out the precious excellency of this Grace of Faith, and we shall only speak to these things.

I. The first thing that speaketh out the excellency of Faith is this, it exerciseth it self upon a most noble Object (to wit) Jesus Christ: Faith and Love being the two arms of the immortal Soul, by which we do embrace a crucified Saviour, which is often pointed at in Scripture; and we shall point at these three principal acts of Faith, which it exerciseth on Jesus Christ as the Object of it.

1. The first is, to make up an Union betwixt Christ and the Believer. (Faith being indeed an uniting Grace, and that which knitteth the members to the head) and to make this more fully appear, we would point out a little what sweet harmony and correspondence there is betwixt these two Sister-graces, (to wit) Faith and Love. Faith is that nail, which fastneth the Soul to Christ, and Love is that Grace that driveth that nail to the head; Faith at first taketh up a tender grip

grip of Christ, and then Love cometh in and maketh the Soul take a more sure grip of Him.

2. Secondly, Ye may see that harmony in this ; Faith is that Grace which taketh hold (as it were) of the Garments of Christ, and of his Word ; but Love (that ambitious Grace) it taketh hold of the Heart of Christ, and as it were, his Heart doth melt in the hand of Love. Thirdly, it may be seen in this, Faith is that Grace, which draweth the first draught of the likeness and Image of Christ upon a Soul, but that (accomplishing) Grace of Love, it doth compleat these first draughts, and these imperfect lineaments of Christs Image, which were first drawn on the Soul. Fourthly, by Faith and Love the Heart of Christ and of the Believer are so united, that they are no more two, but one Spirit

2. There is this Second Act that Faith exerciseth on Christ, and it is in discovering the matchless excellencies and the transcendent properties of Jesus Christ. O what large and precious commentaries doth faith make upon Christ ? It is indeed that Faithful Spy, which doth always bring up a good report of him ; Hence it is, that Faith is called *understanding*, Col. 2. 2. Because it is that Grace, which revealeth much of the precious Truth of that noble object,

3. And there is this third noble Act of Faith exercising it self upon Christ, *viz.* It maketh Christ precious to the Soul according to that word, 1 Pet. 2. 17. *Unto you which believe, he is precious.* And if there were no other thing to speak forth its worth, but that, It is more than sufficient ; for no doubt this is the exercise of the Higher-House, to be dwelling on the contemplation of Christs beauty, and to have their Souls transported with Love towards him ; and with joy in him. Reason and Amazement are seldom companions, but here they do sweetly joyn together ; First, a Christian loveth Christ because

of Christs Actings; and then he loveth all these actings because they come from Christ.

II. Now secondly this pointeth out the Precious excellency of the Grace of Faith, it is that Grace which is most mysterious and sublime in its Actings, it hath a more divine and sublime way of Acting than any other Grace; Hence it is called, *The mystery of Faith*, which speaketh this, that the Actings of Faith are Mysteries to the most part of the World, and I shall only point at these things which may speak out the Mysterious Actings of the Grace of Faith.

1. Faith can believe, and fix it self upon a Word of promise, although Sense, Reason and Probability seem to contradict the accomplishment of that Promise: Faith it walketh not by the low dictates of Sense and Reason; but by a higher Rule, (to wit) *The sure word of Prophecy*, which is clear from Rom. 4. 19. *Where Abraham believed the Promise*, notwithstanding that Sense and Reason seemed to contradict it: *He considered not the deadness of his own body, neither the barrenness of Sarais womb, but was strong in the Faith, giving glory to God*: As is clear from Heb. 11. 29, 30. *Where Faith Believed their passing through the red Sea, as through dry ground, which was most contrary to Sense and Reason: Faith believed the falling down of the walls of Jericho, by the blowing of horns*. Which things are most impossible for Sense and Reason; for Sense will oftentimes cry out, *All Men are liars*; And Reason will say, *How can such a thing be?* And yet that Heroick Grace of Faith cryeth out, *Hasb he spoken it? He will also do it. Hasb he said it? Then it shall come to pass.*

2. Faith can believe a Word of Promise, notwithstanding that the dispensations of God seem to contradict it; as was clear in Job, who professed, *He would trust in God though he should kill him*. And no doubt, but this was the practice of believing Jacob, he trusted that that promise should be accomplished, *That the elder should serve the younger*, though all the dispensations of God, (which he did meet with) seemed, to say, that promise should not be accomplished.

3. Faith can believe a Word of Promise, even when the Commands of God seem to contradict the accomplishment of that Promise. This is clear in that singular Instance of *Abraham's* Faith, that notwithstanding he was commanded to kill his promised seed (upon whom did depend the accomplishment of the promise) yet he believed that the promise should be performed. And though there were indeed extraordinary and strange Trials of his Faith, as he had natural affections to wrestle with; yet over the belly of all these, believing *Abraham*, he giveth Faith to the Promise, and bringeth his *Yan* to the Altar; (though he did receive him back again) this is clear from *Heb. 11. 17, 18, 19.*

4. Faith can exercise it self upon the Promise, notwithstanding that challenges and convictions of unworthiness and guilt do wait on the Christian; That is clear, *2 Sam. 23. 5.* That although his house was not so with God as did become, yet he believed the Promise: as likewise is clear from *Psal. 65. 3. Iniquities do prevail against me:* and yet that doth not interrupt his Faith, but he saith, *As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.* And certainly, it were a noble and precious act of Faith to believe, notwithstanding of unanswerable challenges of Guilt; the best way both to crucifie our Idols, and to answer these challenges, is believing, and hoping against hope, and closing with Christ: This is most clear from *Isai. 54. 6, 7.* Compared with verse 8, where after strange challenges, the Prophet hath a strange word, *But now, O Lord, thou art our Father.* There is an Emphasis in the word (now) for all this, yet thou art (now) our Father.

5. And lastly, this pointeth out the Mysterious acting of the Grace of Faith, that it exerciseth it self upon an invisible object, even upon Christ not yet seen, according to that word, *1 Pet. 1. 8. Whom having not seen ye love in whom though now ye see him not yet believing, &c.* I hope the greater part of you who are here whether or not those be two of the greatest Paradoxes and Mysteries unto you? For is not this a Mystery to love him whom

eye never saw? Whom having not seen, yet ye love: To love an absent and unseen Christ, is a Mystery to the most part of the World: and is not this a Mystery to believe on him whom we never saw, In whom, though ye see him not, yet believing, And I shall add this that Faith can hold fast its interest with God, notwithstanding the most precious Christian should call us Hypocrites, and not acknowledge us: this is clear in the practice of Job; and most clear from that word *Isai. 63. 16. Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not.*

III. Thirdly, this pointeth out the excellency of the Grace of Faith, that Faith, (when it is in the exercise) is that Grace by which a Christian doth attain into most sensible enjoyments. There is a great Question that is much debated among Christians, what is the way to win this happy length, to be always under the sweet and refreshing influence of Heaven and to have this dew always coming down upon our branches I can give no answer to it, but this, be much in the exercise of Faith: This is clear upon that notion and name put upon Faith, *Isa. 45. 22. It is called a look to Christ, which is a most sensible Act. If ye would know a description of Faith, It is this, The divine contemplation of the Immortall Soul, upon that divine excellent and precious object, Jesus Christ. For God never made Faiths liar, and therefore its eye is never off him that is the noble object of Faith, Jesus Christ manifested in the Gospel as it is clear, Ephes. 1. 18. After ye believed ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of Promise, which preacheth out the excellent enjoyments these had after their closing with Christ who is invisible. Our Faith is called a seeing which speaketh out this that Faiths sight of God is as certain as if we did behold him with our eyes, as is clear, Heb. 11. 27. Moses saw Him by Faith who is invisible. And we conceive that the ground which maketh the most part of us have such complaints, How long wilt thou forget us for ever? It is this, the want of the Spiritual exercise of Faith: and are there not*

not some here who may cry out, *It is more than thirty days since I did behold the King*; Yea there are some who may go a greater length, and cry out *I have lived these two years at Jerusalem, and yet I have not seen the Kings Face*? Yea, there are some here whose complaint may go a little higher, and cry forth, *These three years and six months it hath not rained on me*, but the clouds have been restrain'd and bound up, and the Heavens have become brass. And would you know the rise of these complaints, it is this, ye are not much in the Spiritual exercise of Faith. And to you I would only say these two Words. First, It is easier to perswade a reprobate that he is defective in the fear of God, and in his love to God, than to perswade some such that they are wanting to God in their Faith; for they hold fast that piece of desperat iniquity till they die. Secondly, We would say to these of you who have the valley of Achor for a door of hope, and have tasted of the sweetness of Christ, some of you will be less convinc'd, for the neglect of the duty of Faith, than for the neglect of the duty of Prayer, or of the duty of keeping the Sabbath day. But I am perswaded of this, that if the noble worth of that transcendent object were known we would have a holy impatience, until once we did believe.

IV. Fourthly, This pointeth out the excellency of the Grace of Faith, it is that Grace by which a Christian is advanced to the highest and most inconceivable pitch of dignity, and that is to be the Child of the living God: As is clear Job. 1. 12. *To as many as received (or believed in him) he gave power or prerogative to become the sons of God*. And certainly that noble prerogative of Adoption is much undervalued by many: And I will tell you two grounds whereon the most part of Men undervalue the excellent Gift of Adoption: First, They do not take up the infinit highness of God (and what a one He is) otherwise they would cry out with David, *Seemeth it a small thing in your eyes to be a son to the King of kings*? Secondly, We do not take up, nor understand these matchless Priviledges which are given to them who

are once in this estate, I am perswaded, if this were believed, that he who is a servant doth not abide in the house for ever, (though he that is a Son doth) it would stir us up to more divine Zeal in our pursuit after Faith.

V. Fifthly this likewise pointeth out this excellency of the Grace of Faith, it is that Grace, by which all other Actions are pleasant to God, and are taken off our hand: as is clear, *Heb. 11. 4.* By Faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, which must be understood even of all other duties. And that word, *verse 6. Without Faith it is impossible to please God,* speaketh this also, That by Faith we do exceedingly please Him. And this is a most sad and lamentable reproach to many who are here, that their actions do not please God, because they are not in Faith. Would you know a description of your Prayers? (ye who are hypocrites and destitute of the knowledge of God) it is this, your prayers are the breach of the third Command. *In taking the Name of the Lord in vain, for which he will not hold you guiltless.* And would ye know what is your hearing of Sermons? *It is an abomination to the Lord,* according to that word in *Tit. 1. 10. To the unbelieving and impure nothing is clean.* And as Solomon doth speak, *The plowing of the wicked is sin:* So that all your actions that ye go about, are but an offence to the Majesty of the Lord.

Now we would speak to these two things before we proceed to the evidences of Faith: (I to wit) First, That there is a difference betwixt the direct Act of Faith, and the reflecting Act of Faith. For there may be a direct Act of Faith in a Christian, when he is not perswaded that he doth believe; but the reflecting acts of Faith are these, which a Christian hath, when he is perswaded in his Conscience, that he doth believe. And we would secondly say, That there are many that go down to their Grave under that Soul destroying delusion that they are in the Faith, and yet never did know what Faith is: I am perswaded, there are many whom all the preachers in the World did never perswade, that they did never believe, their Faith being born with them, and

it will die with them, without any Fruit. But Faith being such an excellent Grace, and so advantageous, (whereof we have spoken a few things) we shall speak a little further of it. First, In pointing out some evidences, by which a Christian may know, whether or not he be indeed in the Faith. Secondly, I shall give you some helps whereby Faith may be kept in exercise.

1. Now there is this first evidence of Faith, that a Christian who doth believe, he accounteth absence and want of fellowship with Christ and Communion with him, one of the greatest and most lamentable Crosses that ever he had; as is clear, *Psal. 13. 3. Lighten mine eyes*, saith David that is, *Let me behold, and be satisfied with Thy Face* and the motive that he backeth it with, is this, *Left I sleep the sleep of death*. David thought himself a dead man, if Christ did withdraw his presence from him. Also it is clear, *Can. 3. 1.* (compared with the following verses) where absence from Christ, and want of communion with Him was the greatest Cross that the spouse had; and it is clear from *John. 20. 11, 12, 13.* Where Mary had a holy disdain of all things in respect and comparison of Christ. But I will tell you what a Hypocrite doth most lament, and that is the want of Reputation among the Saints: That is the great god, and idol among Hypocrites, and that which (when not enjoyed) Hypocrites and Atheists lament most, the World, and the loss of their Eyes when they want these, then they cry out, *They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* They think Heaven can never make up the loss of Earth. And certainly, if many of us would examine our selves by this, we would find our selves most defective. I would pose all you who are here, who have taken on a name to be followers of Christ, whether or not ye have been content to walk thirty days in absence from Christ, and yet never to lament it? Hath not Christ been thirty days and more in Heaven, without a visit from you? and yet for all this, ye have not clothed your selves with Sackcloth, I will not

nor say, that this is an undeniable evidence of the total want of the grace of Faith, but it doth evidently prove this, That the person who hath come this length, hath lost much of his primitive Love, and much of that high esteem which he ought to have of matchless Christ. What can you find in this World, that maketh you converse so little with Heaven? I think that it is the noble encouragement of a Christian, when he is going down to his Grave, that he hath this wherewith to comfort himself, *I am to change my place but not my Company*: death to the believing Christian being a blessed transition and transportation to a more immediat and constant and uninterrupted enjoyment of God. But I believe, That if all who have the Name of Believers in this Generation should go to Heaven, they might have this to say, I am now not only to change my place, but also my company; for these seventy years I have been conversant with my Idols, but now I am to converse with more Blessed, Divine, and excellent company. O that ye would be perswaded to pursue much after an absent Christ. Were it not a sweet period of our life, to breath out our last breath in his arms, and to be living in the Faith of being eternally with him, which might be founded upon his Word.

I I. There is this second evidence of one that is in the Faith: They do endeavour to advance that necessary work of the mortification of their Idols, according to that Word, 1 John 3. 4. *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure*, Acts 15. 9. *Faith it purifieth the Heart*. And concerning this evidence (lest any should mistake it) I would say these things to you. First, The mortification of a Christian, as long as he is here below, it doth more consist in resolutions than attainments. It is certain that there are high attainment of a Christian, in the mortification of his idols, but his resolutions go far above his performances. Secondly, We will say this, That those Christians who never came this length in Christianity, to make that an universal conclusion, and full resolution, *What have*

Have I to do any More with Idols? They may suspect themselves, that they are not in the Faith: For a Christian that is in Christ, he is universal in resolutions, though he be not so in practice, but defective in performance: A Christian may have big Resolutions with weak performances; for Resolution will be at the Gate of Heaven, before Practice come from the borders of Hell; there being a long distance betwixt Resolution and practice; and the one much swifter than the other. And thirdly, We would likewise say, That ye who never did know what it was to endeavour (by Prayer and the exercise of other Duties,) the Mortification of your Lusts and Idols; ye may be afraid, that ye have not yet the hope of seeing him as he is. And I would say this to many, who are settled upon their lees, and who never did know what it was to spend one hour in secret Prayer for mortifying of an Idol, that they would beware lest that curse be past in Heaven against them; *I would have purged you; and ye would not be purged therefore ye shall not be purged any more till you die;* That iniquity of refusing to commune with Christ in the work of secret Mortification, I say, *that iniquity shall not be purged away.* And we would once seriously desire you, by that dreadful Sentence that Christ shall pass against you, and by the Love ye have to your immortal Souls, and by the pains of these everlasting torments of Hell, that ye would seriously set about the work of Spiritual Mortification; that so ye may evidence that ye have believed, and that ye have the Soul-comforting hope of eternal life. I would only speak this one word to you, (and desire you seriously to ponder it,) What if within twelve hours hereafter a Summonds were given you (without continuation of days) to compare before the solemn and dreadful Tribunal of that Impartial Judge, Jesus Christ: What suppose ye, would be your thoughts? Will ye examine your own Conscience, what think ye would be your thoughts, if such Summonds were given unto you, I am perswaded of this, *That your knees would smite one against another, and your face should gather paleness,*

ness, seeing your Conscience would condemn you That ye had been weighed in the ballance, and found light? O think ye that ye can both fight and triumph in one day? Think ye that ye can fight and overcome in one day? Think ye your Lusts and unmortified Corruptions so weak and faint-hearted, an enemy, that upon the first appearance of such imaginary Champions (as most part of us are in our own eyes) that your Idols would lay down Arms and let you trample on them? Believe me, Mortification is not a work of one day, or one year, but it is a work will serve you all your time, begin as soon as you will; And therefore seeing you have spent your days in the Works of the Flesh, it is time that now ye would begin and pursue after Him, whose work is with Him, and whose reward shall come before Him.

III. Now there is his third evidence, by which a Christian may know whether he be in the Faith or not, and it is, that Christ is matchless and incomparable unto such an one, according to that word, *1 Pet. 2. 2. To you that believe Christ is precious*, and that Word that Luke hath in his 7. Chapter, at the close, *That he to whom much was forgiven, loved much*; Now lest this likewise should prove a discouragement to any, I would only have you taking notice of this, that a Christian may be a believer, and yet want the sensible discoveries of this, that Christ is matchlessly precious to him, but this is certain, that they which are in the lively exercise of Faith, it is impossible then for them not to esteem Christ matchless. And I would speak this likewise to many who are here; Have you not been living these ten years in Faith, And I would persuade you with this, esteem you not your Idols more matchless than Christ, and more of worth than He? It is impossible that there can be any lively exercise of Faith, and not esteem Christ matchless. It is not to say with your mouth, and contradict it with your Heart, will do the business; For if your heart could speak, it would say, I would sell Christ for thirty pieces

pieces of silver: But my Idols would I sell at no rate. Are there not many of you who love the World and its pleasures, better nor the Eternity of Joy? Oh, know ye not that Word (O ye desperately ignorant of the Truths of God,) *That he who loveth the World, the love of the Father is not in him*; And yet notwithstanding of the Light of the Word, ye would sell your immortal souls (with Esau) *for a mess of Pottage*: O but it is a poor bargain when ye have sold the eternity of joy for a passing World, and for its transitory delights? I would earnestly know what shall be your thoughts in that day, when ye shall be standing upon the utmost line betwixt Time and Eternity. O what will be your thoughts at that day? but you are to follow on to an endless pain, (by appearance) and then you are to leave your Idols. I shall only desire, that ye may read the Word, *Isa. 10. 3. What will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? To whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your Glory?* Ye shall then preach Mortification to the life, though all the time of Mortification shall then be cut off. O but to hear a Worldly minded Man, when eternity of pain is looking him in the Face, (preach out concerning the vanitie of this World) might it not persuade you that the World is a fancy and a dream that shall flee away, and shall leave you in the day of your greatest straits.

IV. And there is this fourth evidence of Faith, That a Christian, who doth truly believe, he is that Christian who entertaineth a divine jealousy and a holy suspicion of himself, whether or no he doth believe; I love not that Faith which is void of fear, this was clear in the practice of believing *Neb.* that though by Faith he built the Ark, yet he had fear mixed with his Faith. I know that there are some who are ignorant concerning this, what it is to doubt concerning eternal peace; and more, it is not every one that doubteth that certainly shall get Heaven; for I think an Hypocrite may doubt concerning his eternal Salvation; however,

I think the exercise of a Hypocrite under his doubts, it is more the exercise of his judgement, than the exercise of his Conscience: And I may say, That if all the exercise of the Law, which is preached in these days, were narrowly searched, it would be more the exercise of Light than the exercise of Conscience. We speak these things as our doubt, which never was our exercise, and we make these things our publick exercise, which was never our privat Chamber exercise. And I think that if all that a Christian did speak to God in prayer, were his exercise, he would speak less and wonder more. We would be speechless when we go to God; for often if we did speak nothing but our exercise, we would have nothing to say. And certainly it is true, that we often fall into that wofull sin, *Of desperat lying against the Holy Ghost*, by flattering God with our Mouth, and lying unto him with our Tongue. And I shall only say these two words, There are some who have this for their great design, *viz.* they would be at peace with their Conscience, and also they would be at peace with their Idols, they would gladly reconcile Conscience and their Idols together, that is their great design. And there are some whose design is a little more refined, they study rather to be reconciled with their Conscience, than to be reconciled with God; Their great aim they shoot at, is this, to get their Consciences quieted, though they know not what it is, to have the Soul-comforting peace of God to quiet them.

V. Now, there is this last evidence of Faith, That justifying Faith is a Faith which putteth the Christian to be much in the exercise of these duties, by which it may be maintained, for we must keep Faith as *the apple of our eye*; And for that end, I would only give you these three things, by which Faith must be kept in exercise and a real Christian will be endeavouring in some measure to attain unto these.

1. It keepeth Faith much in exercise, to be much in marking and taking notice of the Divine exercise and proofs

proofs of the Love of God, wherewith a Christian cloth meet, as is clear from that word, *Rom. 5. 4. Experience worketh hope.* I durst be bold to charge the most part that are indeed in Christ with this; that they are too little in remarking and taking notice of the experience of his Love. Ye should mark the place of your experience it self: as is clear from Scripture, that the very place where Christians did meet with experience, in such an enjoyment of God, they marked it, *Exak. 1. 1. By the river of Chebar the Heavens were opened, and I saw the vision of God.* And *Gen. 32. 30. Jacob called the place peniel, the place of living, after seeing the Face of GOD: it was so remarkable unto him.* And we conceive that ye would mark these two things mainly in your practice. First, Ye would mark (if ye can possibly) the first day of your closing with Christ, and of your coming out of Egypt: and we may allude unto the Command (if not more than allude unto it,) *Deut. 26. 1. Observe the moneth of Abib, and keep the passover unto the Lord thy God: For in the moneth of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee out of the Land of Egypt.* And secondly, we would have you much in marking these experiences which have increased your Faith, and which have strengthened your Love, and which have made you mortifie your Idols; These are experiences especially to be marked.

2. Faith is kepted in exercise, and we win to the lively assurance of our interest in God: which we would prove upon you, by being much in the exercise of secret prayer. O but many love much to pray when abroad, who never loved to pray when alone. And this is a desperat sign of Hypocrisie, according to that, *Mat. 6. 5. It is said of Hypocrites, They love to pray standing in the Synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they might be seen of men: But it is never said of these persons, that they love to pray alone, only they loved to pray in the Synagogues, but it is secret, and retired prayer, by which Faith must be kepted in exercise;*

3. And

3. And there is this likewise that we would press upon you, that ye would be much in studying communion and fellowship with God, so that your Faith may be kept in life. And O what a blessed life were it, each day to be taken up to the top of Mount Pisgah, and there to behold that promised Land, to get a refreshing sight of the Cown every morning, which might make us walk with joy all along that day? The Heart of a Christian ought to be in Heaven, His Conversation ought to be there, his eyes ought to be there. And I know not what of a Christian ought to be out of Heaven, even before his going there, save his lumps of clay, which cannot inherit incorruption, till he be made incorruptible. But I shall say no more but this many of us are readier to betray him with a kiss, and crucifie him a fresh, than to keep communion with him: But wo eternally be to him by whom the Son of Man is betrayed, and that doth crucifie Christ afresh; it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the depth of the Sea. I remember an expression of a Man, not two days ago who (upon his death-bed) being asked of one what he was doing; did most stupidly though most truly reply, *That he was fighting with Christ*; and I think that the most part of us (if he prevent us not) shall die fighting with Christ; But know, and be persuaded, that he is too sore a party for us to fight with; He will once tread upon you in the Wine-press of his fury, and he shall return with dyed garments from treading such as you as would not embrace him; He shall destroy you with all his Heart. Therefore be instructed, lest his Soul be disjoyned from you (as that word in Jer. 6. 8. And lest your Souls be eternally separated from him; Be I say, instructed to close with him by Faith. Now to him who can make you to do so, we desire to give Praise.

In the two Sermons next following, you have the rest of these sweet Purposes, which the worthy Author Preached upon the same Text.

SERMON

S E R M O N V.

John 3. 23. *This is his commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ.*

T Here are two great Rocks upon which a Christian doth ordinarily dash in his way and motion toward his rest, 1. The Rock of presumption and carnal Confidence; so that when Christ dandleth them upon his knees, and satisfieth them with the Breasts of His Consolations, and maketh their Cup to overflow, then they cry out, *My mountain shall stand strong, I shall never be moved.* And 2. The Rock of misbelief and discouragement; So that, When he hideth his Face, and turneth back the Face of his Throne, then they cry out, *Our hope and our strength is perished from the Lord,* we know not what it is to bear our enjoyments by Humility, nor our crosses by patience and Submission. O but misbelief and jealousy are bad interpreters of dark dispensations, they know not what it is to read these Mysterious Characters of divine Providence, except they be Written in legible Characters of Sense; misbelief is big with Child of Twins, and is travailing, till it bring forth Apostacy and Security, and no doubt he is a blessed Christian that hath overcome that wo'ld of misbelief, and doth walk by that Royal Law of the Word, and not by that changeable Rule of dispensations. We conceive that there are three great Idols and Dragons of a Christian, that hindereth him from putting a black in Christs hand concerning his guiding to Heaven, there is Pride, Self-Indulgence and Security. Do we not covet to be more excellent than our Neighbour? Do we not love to travel to Heaven through a valley of Riches? And do we not ambitiously desire to walk toward Sion sleeping (rather than weeping.)

us we go? Are there not some words that we would have taken out of the Bible? That is sad Divinity to flesh and blood, Through many tribulations must we enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: we love not to be changed from vessel to vessel, that so our scent may be taken from us.

There are three great enemies of Christ: Misbelief, Hypocrisie, and Prophanity: Misbelief is a bloody sin, Hypocrisie is a silent sin, Prophanity is a crying sin. These are Mother evils, and I shall give you these differences betwixt them: Misbelief crucifieth Christ under the vail of humility, Hypocrisie crucifieth Christ under the vail of Love; and Profanity putteth him to open shame. Misbelief denyeth the Love and Power of God, Hypocrisie denyeth the Omniscieny of God, and Profanity denyeth the Justice of God. Misbelief is a sin that looketh after inherent Righteousness, Hypocrisie is a sin that looketh after external holiness only, and Profanity is a sin that looketh after Heaven without Holiness: making connexion between these things that God hath always separat, and separating these things which he hath always put together: so that their Faith shall once prove a delusion, and fly away as a dream in the night, but let us study this excellent Grace of true and saving Faith, which shall be a precious remedy against all those Christ destroying and Soul-destroying evils.

But now to come to that which we did purpose thirdly to be spoken of from the words, which was the sweetness of this grace of Faith; no doubt, it is a pleasant command, and it maketh all commands pleasant, it is that which casteth a divine luster upon the most hard sayings of Christ, and maketh the Christian to cry forth, *God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoyce.* We need not stand long to clear that Faith is a sweet and refreshing Command, for it is oftentimes recorded in Scripture to the advantage of this Grace; and unspeakable joy and Heavenly delight are the hand-maids that wait upon it. But more particularly to make it out, we shall speak to these things.

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The first is, That this grace giveth a Christian a broad and comprehensive sight of Christ, maketh him to behold not only the beauty of his actings, but the beauty of his person : and there are these three precious sights that Faith giveth to a Christian of Christ: First, it letteth the Christian see Christ in his absolute and personal excellency, taking him up as the eternal Son of God, as the Ancient of days, as the Father of eternity, as *the express Image of His Fathers person, and the brightness of his glory*, and this filleth the Soul with divine fear and admiration. Hence is that word, Heb. 11. 27. *That we see by Faith him that is invisible*. As if he had said, Faith is that grace that maketh things that are invisible, visible unto us. Secondly, It letteth the Soul see Christ in his relative excellencies, that is, what he is to us; Faith taketh up Christ as a Husband, and from thence we are provoked to much boldness and divine Confidence, and withal, to see these rich possessions that are provided for us by our Elder Brother, who was *born for adversity*; Faith taketh up Christ as a *Blessed Days-Man that did lay his hand upon us both*: And from thence is constrained to wonder at the condescendency of Christ, it taketh him up as dying, and as redeeming us from the power of the grave, and from the Hands of our Enemies; and this provoketh Christians to make a total & absolute resignation of themselves over unto Christ, *To serve Him all the Days of our Life, in Righteousness and Holiness*. And thirdly, Faith maketh the Soul to behold these Mysterious Draughts of spotless Love, those Divine Emanations of Love that have flowed from his ancient and everlasting Love since the World began. Would you know the great ground why we are so ignorant of Him, who is the study of Angels, and of all that are about the Throne? It is this, we are not much in the exercise of Faith. And if we would ask that question, What is the way to attain to the saving knowledge of God in Christ? We could give no answer to it but this, Believe and again Believe, and again

D

Believe

Believe: Faith openeth these mysterious Seals of his boundless perfection, and in some way reacheth the Christian to answer that unanswerable question *What is His Name and what is his Sons Name?*

There is this Secondly that pointeth out the sweetness of Faith, that it giveth an excellent relish unto the Promises, and maketh them Food to our Souls. What are all the Promises without Faith (as to our use) but a dead letter that hath no Life; but Faith exercised upon the Promises, maketh a Christian cry out *The Words of His Mouth are sweeter unto me than the honey and the honey comb*; as is clear from *Heb. 11. 13*. It is by Faith that we imbrace the Promises, and do receive them.

Thirdly, The sweetness of Faith may appear by this, that it enableth a Christian to rejoyce under the most anxious and afflicting dispensations that he meeteth with while he is here below; as is clear from *Rom. 5: 1, 5*. where his being justified by Faith, hath this fruit attending it, to *joy in tribulation*; And likewise from *Heb. 10. 34, 35*. Doth not Faith hold the Crown in the right hand, and letteth a Christian behold their infinite Dignities that are provided unto them after they have, *as a strong Man run their race*. And when a Christian is put into a furnace hot seven times more than ordinary, it bringeth down the Son of Man Jesus Christ, to *walk with them in the furnace*; So that they walk safely, and with joy through fire and water (and in a manner) they can have no Cross in his company. For would ye know what is the description of a Cross? It is to want Christ in any estate. And would ye know what is the description of prosperity? It is to have Christ in any condition or estate of Life; What can ye want that have Him? and what can ye have that want Him? He is that All so that all things besides him are but vanity. But besides this, Faith doth discover unto a Christian, that there is a sweet period of all his tryals and afflictions that he can be exposed unto; so that he can never fa

that of Faith, which *Ahab* spake of *Micajah*, He never prophesieth good things to me. But rather he may say always the contrary, Faith never prophesieth evil unto me, it being a Grace that prophesieth excellent things in the darkest night, and sweetly declareth, that through weeping do endure for the evening yet joy cometh in the morning; And that, though now they go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, yet at last they shall return rejoicing, bearing sheaves in their bosom.

And this may bring in the fourth consideration to point out the sweetness of Faith, That it giveth a Christian a refreshing sight of that Land that is afar off, and maketh him to behold that inheritance that is provided for the *Saints in light*; it goeth forth to the *Brook Eschol*, and there doth pluck down those grapes that grow in *Emmanuel's Land*, to bring up a good report upon that noble Countrey, we are sojourning towards, and the City, the Streets whereof are paved with transparent Gold. And howbeit it may be a perplexing debate between many and their own souls, whether or not these eyes that have been the windows through which so much uncleanness have entered, and these species of Lust have been conveyed into the Heart, shall once be like the eyes of a dove washed with milk and scily set; and be admitted to see that glorious Object, *The Lamb that sitteth upon the Throne*: Or whether ever these tongues that have been set on fire of hell; and these polluted lips that have spoken so much against God, and Heaven, and all his people, and interests, shall ever be admitted to sing these heavenly *Hallelujahs* amongst that spotless quiet of Angels, and that assembly of the first born; or if these hands or feet that have been so active to commit iniquity, and so swift to run after vanity, shall ever be admitted hereafter to carry these *Palm Branches*, and to follow the *Lamb* wherever he goeth; and whether ever these Hearts that have been indeed a *Bethaven*, a *House of Idols*, may yet notwithstanding, be a dwelling for the Holy Ghost. Though these things (we say) and such like

like may be the subject of many sad debates to some Weary Souls, and cause many *tossings to and fro till the morning*: yet Faith can bring all these Mysteries to light, and looking *within the veil*, can let us see thousands of thousands, who were once as ugly as our selves yet now having *washed their Robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb*, are admitted to stand before the Throne of God, and serve him Day and Night.

Now there is that Fourthly; which we promised to speak of concerning this Grace of Faith from these words, and it is the absolute necessity that is of the exercise of this Grace which is holden forth in that word *His Commandment*; which doth import these three things; 1. That all the Commands that we can obey without this Commandment of Faith, it is but a polluting of our selves in the Ditch till our own cloaths abhor us. 2. That God taketh greater delight in the exercise of that Grace of Faith, than in the exercise of any other. And lastly, That as to the many imperfections which we have in our obedience, there is a sweet Act of Oblivion past of them all; if we make conscience seriously to obey this Command of Faith, which is indeed the sweet compend of the Gospel, all these things do most clearly appear, in that believing here is called, *His Commandment*, by way of excellency, as if this were his only Commandment.

But that we may yet a little more particularly point out the absolute necessity of Faith, there are these things that speaketh it forth to the full, 1. That though rivers of tears should run down our eyes, because we keep not his Law, though we should never rise off our knees from Prayer, and should all our life timespeak to God with the tongue of Angels; and though we should constantly obey his Commands, yet without Faith we should never escape that eternal sentence of excommunication from the presence of the Lord; there being no action that doth proceed from us which can please the Majesty of the Lord, unless it hath its rise from this principle of Faith; as is clear

clear from Heb. 11. 6. *Without Faith it is impossible to please God.* And though we should offer unto him ten thousand rivers of Oyl, and thousands of rams, and should offer up in a brunt Sacrifice all the beasts that are upon the mountains, and the trees that are upon many hills, this should be the answer that God should return unto us, *Who hath required these things at your hands? I take no pleasure in these solemn sacrifices;* Because there is no way of attaining peace with God, but through the exercise of Faith, making use of the spotless Righteousness of Christ. 2. Let us do our utmost, by all the inventions we can, to bring down our Body and let us separate our selves from all the Pleasures of the flesh: yet all our Idols shall reign without much contradiction, except once we do attain unto this Grace of Faith, which is that victory, *whereby we must overcome the world,* and the hand that maketh use of infinite strength for subduing of corruption, making the Christian *sweetly to be able to say, stronger is he that is with us, than he that is in the World.*

From all this that we have said, both of the sweetness of Faith, and the necessity thereof, we would propose these few considerations, to two or three sorts of persons. 1. There are some who live in that vain imaginary delusion of attaining Heaven through a Covenant of Works, and do neglect to seek salvation by Faith, in the Righteousness of Christ. And to those who build upon this sandy foundation, I shall say but these two words. First, How long shall you labour in the fire of airy vanity? Do you never think to put on the Cape-stone? know ye not that the day is approaching, when your Houses shall fall about your ears your confidence shall be rejected, and your hope shall vanish as a dream, and flee away as a vision of the night? Secondly, What a monstrous blindness, and what an unspeakable act of folly must it be, to say, that Christ was crucified in vain? which yet ye do practically assert when ye go about to purchase a Righteousness through the Works of the Law.

2. There are some who are secure in their own thoughts concerning their Faith: they never questioned the reality of it, they never examined it. O ye whose Faith is cold as your selves, ye say ye never knew what it was to dispute, and I may say ye never knew what it was to believe. Thou prophane Hypocrite, let me tell thee, a strong Faith, and yet strong Idols, must needs be a strong delusion, Thou wilt not obey the Lord, thou wilt not Pray, thou wilt not believe a Threatning in all the Word, thou wilt count all Religion Madness and Foolishness, and yet thou wilt perswade they self thou believest in Christ. *O be not deceived, God is not mocked:* and why will ye mock your selves? Shall I tell you that Reprobates have a sad Religion, one day they must Believe, and Obey, and Pray, and give Testimony to Godliness, but alas; too late, and little to their advantage. Shall ~~any~~ ^{all} the Ministers on earth could scarcely ever perswade to believe ~~in~~ ^{Heaven or Hell,} or one Threatning in all the Book of God, at last forced to believe their own sense, when they shall see the Ancient of Days upon the Throne, and shall hear the cry's of so many thousand living witnesses come out both from Heaven and Hell, bearing Testimony to the Truth of Threatnings and Promises? that not one jot of them is fallen to the ground. And he who would never be perswaded to bow a knee to God in earnest all his life, shall he not then pray with greatest fervency *that hills and mountains might fall upon him? to cover him from the Face of the Lamb;* And he that would never submit to a Command of God, must he not at last obey that dreadful command, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting torment, &c.* Yea, he who was the greatest mocker in the world, shall then confess, that they are blest, who put their trust in the Lord, as they are excellently brought in, though in Apocriphal Book, *Wisdom c. 5.4.* Crying out with great Terrour, while they behold that unexpected sight of the glorious condition of the Godly. O here are the Men
say,

say they, whom we mocked, whose life we accounted madness, and their end dishonourable : Be wise therefore in time, and do that willingly, which ye must do by constraint, and do that with sweetness and advantage, that ye must do at length with loss and sorrow.

Thirdly, There are some who certainly have some hope of eternal life, but contenteth themselves with a small measure of assurance, and these I would beseech that ye would be more endeavouring to make your calling and election sure, and would be endeavouring to see your names written in the Ancient Records of Heaven : and this we shall press upon you by several Arguments. 1. Those strong and subtile, and soul destroying delusions that are amongst many, who conceive they do believe, (as we were saying) and *are pure in their own eyes, who are not yet purged from their iniquities.* O! are there not many of us that are in a golden dream, that suppose *we are eating, but when we awake our Soul is empty,* whose Faith is a metaphysick notion that hath no foundation, but mens apprehension; and this shall never bear us through the gates of death, nor convey us in into eternity *Oh my.* 2. May not this press you to follow after assurance, that is a compendious way to sweeten all your Crosses : as is clear from Heb. 3. 17, 18. Where the convictions of this made Habbakuk to rejoyce in the God of his Salvation? *Though the fig tree did not bear Fruit, and the labour of the olive did fail, and there were no sweetness to be found in the wine,* and from Heb. 10. 34. Where they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods ; knowing within themselves, that *they had a better and an enduring substance :* This is indeed that Tree which if we cast into the waters of Marah, they will presently become sweet, for it is not below the child of hope to be much anxious about these things that he meets with here, when he sincerely knoweth that Commandment shall come forth, *Life up your head, for the day of your eternal redemption draweth near,* even the day when all the rivers of this sorrow

shall sweetly run into the Ocean of everlasting delights. 3. A Christian that is much in assurance, he is much in Communion and fellowship with God, as is clear from the *Song* 1. 13, 14. and *Song* 2. 3. Where when once she cometh to that, to be perswaded that Christ was her beloved, then she sat down under his shadow, and his fruit was pleasant unto her taste: for the assured Christian doth taste of these crumbs that fall from that higher Table, and no doubt, these that have tasted of that old wine will not straight way desire the new, because the old is better. And then 4. It is the way to keep you from Apostacy, and making defection from God: Faith is that Grace which will make you continue with Christ in all his temptations, as is clear from a *Ps.* 1. 10. Where this is set down as a fruit of making our calling and election sure, that if we do these things we shall never fall; Faith makes a Christian to live a dependent life; for would you know the motto of a Christian? It is this, *Self diffidence and Christ-dependence*, as is clear from that word, in the *Song* 8. 5. That while we are walking though this wilderness, we are leaning upon our well beloved. 5. This assurance will help a Christian to overcome many Temptations. There are four sorts of Temptations that assault the Christian: There are temptations of desire, temptations of Love, temptations of hope, and temptations of anxiety, all which a Christian through this noble Grace of Assurance may sweetly overcome; he that hath once made Christ his own, what can he desire but him? As *Psal.* 27. 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord:* What can he love more than Christ, or love besides Christ, all his love being drowned, (as it were) in that Ocean of his excellencies, and a sweet complacency found in the enjoyment of him. And as to hope: will not assurance make a Christian cry forth, *Now Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.* And when the heart is anxious, doth not assurance make a Christian content to bear the indignation of the Lord, and patiently submit unto

unto the Cross, since there is a sweet connexion betwixt His Cross, and his Crown, Rom. 8. 35, 36. *If he suffer with Him, he shall also Reign with Him.* And lastly, there is this argument to press you to assurance, that it sweetneth the thoughts of Death; it maketh Death unto a Christian not the King of Terrors, but the King of Desires: and it is upon these grounds that assurance maketh Death refreshful unto a Christian. 1. He knoweth that it is the Funeral of all his miseries, and the Birth-day of all his blessings and Eternal Enjoyments. This is the Coronation day of a Christian, and the day when he shall have that Marriage betwixt Christ and him sweetly solemnized; And that when he is to step that last step, he knoweth that Death will make him change his Place, but not his Company; And O that we could once win unto this, to Seal that Conclusion without presumption, *My beloved is mine, and I am his,* we might without presumption, sing one of the Songs of Sion, even while we are in this strange Land, and taking Christ in our Arms, might sweetly cry forth, *Now lettest thou thy servants depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy Salvation.* Comfort your selves in this, that all your Clouds shall once pass away, and that Truth shall once come to pass which was confirmed by the Oath of an Angel, with his hand lifted up towards Heaven, *That time shall be no more.* Time shall once sweetly die out in Eternity, and ye may be looking after new Heavens and a new Earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. O long to be with him, for Christ longeth to have yow with Him.

S E R M O N V I.

1 John 3. 24. *This is his Commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, &c.*

THere are three most precious and Cardinal Graces, which a Christian ought mainly to pur

sue: There is that exalting Grace of Faith, that Com-
 forting Grace of Hope, and that aspiring Grace of
 Love: And if once a Christian did take up that
 heavenly difference that is between these Sister
 Graces, he might be provoked to move after them
 most swiftly, as the Chariots of *Amminadab*: And there
 is this difference between these Graces; Faith is a
 sober and silent Grace: Hope is a patient and sub-
 missive Grace: Love is an ambitious and impatient
 Grace. Faith cryeth out, *O! my soul, be silent unto God.*
 Hope cryeth out, *I will wait patiently for the Lord,*
Until the vision shall speak. But love it cryeth out, *How*
long art thou a coming? And it is waiting to hear the
 sound of his Feet coming over the mountains of separation.
 That is the Motto of Hope, *Quod desertur, non auferitur*;
 that which is delayed, saith Hope, is not altogether
 taken away, and made void: And that may be the
 Divine Emblem of the Grace of Love; It is sight, in-
 folding Desire in his Arms, and it is desire cloathed
 with Wings, treading upon Delay and impediments.
 There is this second difference between these Graces;
 the Grace of Faith, it imbraceth the Truth of the Pro-
 mises: the Grace of Hope, it imbraceth the goodness
 of the thing that is promised; but that exalting Grace
 of Love, it imbraceth the Promiser: Faith cryeth out,
Hath he spoken it he will also do it: Hope cryeth out,
Good is the Word of the Lord, be it unto thy Servant according
to thy Promise: And Love it cryeth with an higher
 Note, *As is the apple tree amongst the trees of the wood, so is*
my well beloved amongst the Sons. Thirdly, There is
 that difference between these Graces, Faith, it over-
 cometh Temptations; Hope it overcometh diffi-
 culties, and Love stayeth at home, and divideth the
 spoil: There is a sweet correspondence between those
 Graces in this; Faith, it fighteth and conquereth; and
 Hope it fighteth and conquereth, but Love it doth
 enjoy the Trophies of the victory, And Fourthly,
 there is this difference, the noble Grace of Faith it
 shall once vanish into light; That noble Grace of
 Hope

Hope, it shall once vanish into possession and enjoyment; But that constant Grace of Love, it shall be the eternal companion of a Christian, and shall walk in with him into the streets of the *New Jerusalem*. And I would ask you that question, What a day shall it be, when Faith shall cede to sight? what a day shall it be when Hope shall yield its place to Love, and Love and Sight shall eternally sit down, and solace themselves in these blessed Mysteries, these everlasting consolations of Heaven, world without end. And Fifthly, There is this difference, less will Satisfie the Grace of Faith, and the Grace of Hope, than will satisfie the Grace of Love; Faith will be content with the Promise, and Hope will be content with the thing that is promised, but that ambitious Grace of Love, it will be only content with the Promiser; Love claspeth his arms about that precious and noble Object Jesus Christ: Love is a suspicious Grace. It oftentimes cryeth forth; *They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him*; So that Faith is oftentimes put to resolve suspicions of Love. I can compare these Three Graces to nothing so fitly, as to those three great Worthies that *David* had, These three Graces, they will break thorow all difficulties, were it an host of Philistines, that so they may pleasure Christ, and may drink of the well of *Bethlehem*, the Well of everlasting consolation that floweth from beneath the Throne of God: Love is like *Noah's* dove, it never findeth rest for the sole of its foot, until once in be within the Ark, that place of repose Jesus Christ.

And sixthly, There is this last difference between them, Faith taketh hold upon the Faithfulness of Christ; Hope taketh hold upon the goodness of Christ: but Love, it taketh hold upon the Heart of Christ. And think ye not it must be a pleasant and soul-refreshing exercise, to be continually taken up in embracing him, that is that eternal admiration of Angels. Must it not be an excellent life, dayly to be feeding on
the

the finest of the wheat, and to be satisfied with honey out of the rock. O but Heaven must be a pleasant place! And if once we would but taste of the first ripe grapes, and a cluster of wine that groweth in that pleasant Land, might not we be constrained to bring up a good report of it.

But now to come to that which I proposed mainly to speak to at this time. The last thing concerning Faith, that we proposed from the words, was the object upon which Faith exerciseth it self, which is here set down to be *the Name of his Son Jesus Christ*. And that we may speak to this more clearly, we shall first speak a little to the negative, what things are not the object of Faith, and then to the positive, shewing how this Name of God, and of his Son Christ, is that sure ground upon which a Christian may pitch his Faith: For the first, ye must know that a Christian is not to build his Faith upon sense, not sensible enjoyments. Sense may be an evidence of Faith, but it must not be the foundation of Faith: I know there are some that oftentimes cry out, *Except I put my fingers into the Print of the nails, and thrust my hand into the hole of his side, I will not believe*: and indeed it is a mystery unto the most part of us, to be exercising Faith upon a naked Word of Promise, abstracting From sense: to love an absent Christ, and to believe on an absent Christ, are the two greatest mysteries of Christianity. But that sense is no good foundation for Faith, may appear, 1. That Faith which is builded upon sense is a most unconstant, a most fluctuating and transient Faith. I know sense hath its fits of Love, and as it were, hath its fits of Faith; Sometimes sense is sick of Love, and sometime sense is strong in Faith, but ere six hours go about, sense may be sick of jealousy, and sick of unbelief, as you will see from Psal. 30. 6, 7. Sense, that bold thing, it will instantly cry out, *My mountain standeth strong; I will never be moved*; but behold how soon it changeth its note, *Thou hidest thy face, and I was troubled*. At one time it will cry forth, *who is like unto Him that gardeneth iniquity*, and that

that passeth over transgressions; but ere many hours go about it will sing a song upon another Key, and cry out; *Why art thou become unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?* 2. That Faith which is built upon sense, it wanteth the promise of blessedness, for this is annexed to believing, that is founded upon the Word, according to that in *John 20, 29. Blessed are those that have not seen and yet have believed.* Nor hath that Faith that is built upon sense, such a solid joy waiting on it, as Faith that is built upon the naked word of Promise, as may be cleared from that word, *1 Pet. 1. 8.* where Faith exerciseth it self upon Christ not seen, maketh a Christian *to rejoyce with joy unspeakable, and full of glory,* a joy that doth not attend believing, founded upon sense. 3. That Faith that is built upon sense, it giveth not much glory to God, for Faith that is built upon sense, it exalteth not the Faithfulness of God, it exalteth not the Omnipotency of God. I will tell you what is the Divinity of sense; let me see, and then I will believe; but it knoweth not what it is to believe upon Trust, and because *the Lord hath spoken in his holiness,* and in effect, Faith that is built upon Sense, is no Faith, even as *Rom. 8. Hope that is seen, is no hope:* And therefore, when the Lord seeth a Christian making Sense an Idol, that he will not believe, but when he seeth and feeleth, this doth often provock the Majesty of the Lord to withdraw himself from the Christian, and to deny him that sweet influence of Heaven, and those consolations that are above, so that in an instant he hath both his Sense, and his Faith to seek.

2. A Christian is not to make his Graces the Object of his Faith; that is, when a Christian doth behold Love burning within him, when he doth behold influences to prayer increasing, and mortification waxing strong, he is not to build his Faith upon them; this was condemned in the Church, in *Ezek. 16. 14.* compared with the 15. verse, *I made thee perfect with my covenant;* but the use that thou didst make of it: thou

thou didst put thy trust in thy beauty, and then thou didst play the harlot. It is certain, that Grace when it is the object of our Faith, it doth provock God to blast the lively exercise thereof, and to make a Christian oftentimes have that complaint; *We to me, my leanness my leanness testifies to my face.* I will tell you three great Mysteries in Christianity about Grace; The first is, to ride Marches between these two, not to deny what they have, and yet to be denyed to what they have, many times there is Grace denying, and not Self denying; but this is that we would press upon you, to be denyed to Grace, according to that Word which is recorded of *Moses, his face did shine and he knew it not*: he did misken it (as it were) and was not at all puffed up with it; for so the words we conceive may run. Secondly, it is a great difficulty for a Christian to be denyed to his Self-denial, to be humble in his being humble: for if pride can have no other foundation, it will build it self upon humility; and a Christian will grow proud in this, that he is growing humble. Thirdly, it is a difficulty for a Christian to examine his growing in Grace, and not be puffed up; It is certain, a Christian ought to examine his growth in Grace humbly, according to that, *Psal. 63. 8. My soul followeth hard after thee, thy right hand upholdeth me.* He doth not only take notice of this, that his Soul did follow after God, but of the measure of that pursuit, *my soul followeth hard after thee*, and yet sweetly acknowledgeth, it was not his own feet which carried him, nor his own hand that kept him from falling.

3. Ye are not to build your Faith upon your Works, and upon the righteousness of the Law: I need not stand long to refute that practical popery that is amongst us, that thinketh we can go to Heaven through a Covenant of Works. I told you not long since, what your going to Heaven through a Covenant of Works speaketh, even this horrid blasphemy; That it was an act of monstrous folly to send Christ to die for

for sinners; for, if you can go to Heaven without him, was not then Christ crucified in vain. And I would tell you now, that this speaketh out your damnable ignorance of the weakness and deceitfulness of your own Hearts. O ye that are so great defenders of Salvation by the Covenant of Works, I beseech you, What is the reason that ye break the Covenant of Works oftner than any; for there is none that thinketh they will go to Heaven this way, but those that are the greatest breakers of the Covenant of Works. And is not that inconsistent, and contradictory Divinity, your faith contradicting your practice, and your practice telling you that your Faith is a lie.

Fourthly, We must not mix our own righteousness with Christs, as the object of our believing: This is indeed an evil that often lodgeth in the bosom of the most refined Hypocrite, when Satan cannot prevail to exclude Christ altogether, then he is content with that whorish woman, to *divide the Child*, and let the object of our Faith be half Christ, and half self; And the truth is, many of these poor unwise sons, who stay long in the place of the breaking forth of Children, do willingly hearken to this Overture, for fear it be presumption for such poor wretches to meddle too boldly with the righteousness of Christ, but it were good such weak ones would consider that word, *Rom. 10. 2.* Where the Holy Ghost calleth the making use of his righteousness, an Act of submission, *They have not submitted* (saith he) *unto the righteousness of Christ.* O will ye not lay this to heart, that our Lord will take your believing, or your putting on his righteousness for an act of great humility, and will take your misbelief as a marvellous act of the highest pride and presumption.

Fifthly, We are not to make providence the object of our Faith. I know there are some that ask the ground of their right to Heaven, they will tell us, that God hath been kind to them all their days; I would only say to such, *He may be feeding you unto the day of slaughter,*
and

and no man knoweth love or hatred by any thing that is before him. This much of the object of Faith negatively.

And now to speak to it positively, we see the Text holdeth out Christ himself as that excellent and compleat Object of Faith, *This is his Commandment, that we believe on the Name of his Son :* and thus Faith closeth with Christ in in a fourfold consideration. First, It closeth with God in Christ, not with God immediately and nakedly ; for he dwelleth in light inaccessible, *that no man can approach unto ; He is higher than the Heaven, what can we do ? and deeper than hell, what can we know ?* Job 11. Therefore we must approach unto him through a vail, even the vail of Christ his flesh, *Heb. 10.* God is a consuming fire, and of purer eyes than he can behold iniquity : and therefore we must first cast our eyes upon that blessed Days-man, that laid his hand upon us both ; and look upon God as in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, and so draw near unto him through a Mediator, who is the first and the last, and he that liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore, able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he liveth for ever to make intercession for them. Secondly, Faith closeth with Christ, as tendered freely in a Covenant of promise. We would have had nothing to do with Christ, if he had not been given of the Father, and offered himself in a free Covenant of promise ; but he being thus holden forth upon terms of free love (which doth utterly abominate hire) and so noble a Proclamation issued forth under the Great Seal of Heaven, *That whosoever will, may come and drink of the water of life freely.* Upon this the poor creature draweth near by vertue of a right, and stretching out the arms of most enlarged affections, doth run upon him with that joyful shout, *My Lord, my God :* and then maketh an absolute Resignation of it self to him ; which is holden out in the Scripture by that sweet expression of *kissing the Son.* And there are three parts of Christ's blessed Body, that the Christian must endeavour to kiss and imbrace ; the Mouth of Christ, the Hand of Christ,

Christ, the Feet of Christ : the Kissing of his Feet importing the exercise of Love, the Kissing of his Hands the exercise of Subjection, and the Kissing of his Mouth the exercise of Communion and Fellowship with him. *Thirdly*, Faith closeth with Christ as the purchaser and meritorious cause of all the good we receive : He is the Person that hath purchased all these things unto us, and there is not one blink of Love, there is not the smallest enjoyment that a Christian meeteth with, but it is the price of the Blood of Christ; Christs precious Blood was laid down for it. *Fourthly*, Faith closeth with Christ as the efficient and worker of all our Mercies ; all our enjoyments are from him as the efficient cause, that is, He is the worker of all these things in us, it is his precious fingers that must accomplish that blessed Work of Grace, and they are from Christ as the dispenser of these things ; Christ is the Great Steward in Heaven, that doth communicate unto Believers all the Treasures of the Higher House : *For Him hath God the Father sealed.* O ! but that Word that Christ once spake, is much verified by himself, *It is more blessed to give, than to receive.* Christ is that Fountain and Treasure in whom all our Gifts and Graces are Treasured up : for before the blessing come to Believers, they come to Christ as the Head, according to that word, *2 Tim. 1. 9 Which grace was given to us in him, before the foundations of the world were laid.* It was given to Christ before the world was made, and for that end, that it might be communicated unto all His Members, and so out of his fulness we all receive, and Grace for Grace.

But, *Secondly*, The Text holdeth forth more particularly this excellent Object of Faith, to be the Name of his Son, *That ye believe in the Name of his Son.* And here indeed we may be at a stand. It is long since *Agur* did run plus all the World with that question, *What is his Name, and what is his Sons Name, if thou canst tell?* O how little a thing can be known of him ! And O how brutish is this Generation ! that know not so much

much loss, that might be known of him in such a day of the Gospel. But that we may speak a little, according to our weak measure of Faith, as closing with the Name of Christ, His Name is his glorious Attributes, by which he revealeth so much of himself in the Scripture, as poor Mortals can take up. We did shew you before, that there was three of these that were the main Pillars of justifying Faith, *Faithfulness, Omnipotency, and his infinit Love and Mercy.* And how from these may be answered all the Objections of Sense, of carnal reason, and of misbelief, arising from convictions of unworthiness. And certain it is, that Faith in all its conflicts, maketh much use of the Names of Christ. And there is not an Objection that a poor tempted Soul can make, but Faith can make an answer to it, out of some of the excellent Names of God, or of his Son Christ. It would be a more longsome work, than I intend, to let you see this in all; But I shall only instance that in *One glorious Name of God*, by which he proclaimeth his Glory, *Exod. 34. The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty, &c.* I think there are seven ordinary Objections which may be answered from that place. *First*, It is an ordinary Objection which misbelievers do make, that they are under the strength of their corruption: that they are black as the *Tents of Kedar*, and not beautiful as the *Curtains of Solomon*: And doth not the first Letter of that Name answer this, that he is a *merciful Lord*? The one importing his ability to Save, and to bring down every high imagination; The other importing his infinit delight to help those who have no strength, and are under the power of their adversaries, the power of God being of no larger extent than his Love. There is that second Objection of misbelief, that we have nothing to commend us to Christ; But all that we have to boast of, are infirmities and imperfections; and this is abundantly answered

answered from that second Letter of his Name, that he is gracious, which importeth the freedom of the dispensations of his Love, that he walketh not with us according to that rule of Merit, but according to that golden and excellent Rule of Love. It is a great dispute whether Mercy or Grace be the greatest wonder, whether the Love of Christ, or the freedom of it, be the greatest Mystery; Sure both these put together make up a matchless wonder? *Thirdly*, Misbelief will object that we have forsaken him days without number; and that we cannot trace back our apostacy unto the first day of its rise; and is not that abundantly answered from that Letter of his Name, that he is long-suffering? *This being that glorious attribute in God, the glory of which he desireth to magnifie above all his Names.* *Fourthly*, Misbelief doth ordinarily propose this Objection, that we have multiplied our transgressions, and have committed whoredom under every green tree; and have given gifts to our lovers, even hiring our idols; so that we may take up that lamentation, is not our sin great, and our transgression infinite? And is not this also answered from that Letter of his Name, that he is abundant in goodness? That though sin abound in us, yet grace doth much more superabound in him. We confess indeed, that there are some that may walk under that condition, that if they had no other exercise throughout eternity, but to make confession, they might confess, and never make any needless repetition; And truly in some respect, it is a mercy that we are Mysteries unto our selves; for if we did know completely the seven abominations of our hearts, and these mysterious workings of the body of death, we would be in hazard to choose strangling and death rather than life; yet may not one glimpse of that abundant goodness satisfy us, and calm the storm? *Fifthly*, Saith misbelief, we know that we have broken our vows and covenants with God, and that all these things that we have taken on, have been but as flax before the fire of temptation, so that we have no hope that he will have mercy upon those that

that have broken wed-lock, and have not been stedfast in his covenant. But is not that abundantly answered from that Letter of his Name, *That he is abundant in truth*; which speaketh that, That though we deny ourselves, yet he abideth faithful, and doth not alter the words that hath gone out of his mouth. It is the infinite blessedness of men, that though they be changeable, yet they have to do with one that is an unchangeable Being. *Sixthly*, There is that Objection, That notwithstanding all these things are matters of encouragement to some, yet they know not whether or not the lot of everlasting Love hath fallen upon them; And whether their Names be in the ancient Records of Heaven. But this is answered from that Letter of his Name, *He keepeth mercy for thousands*, which sheweth us that great number of those upon whom the lot of everlasting Love shall fall; And if there were no other Sentence in all the Scripture, this might be a sufficient matter of a song, and might make us cry out, *Who is like unto him, whose compassions have no end?* And who desires to magnify his mercy above all his works; And lastly Misbelief maketh this Objection, they have sinned not only against light, not only against vows, not only after much enjoyment of God, but even after the application of the threatening; So that they conceive, *that their Maker will not have mercy upon such*. Yet this is fully answered likewise from that Letter of his Name, *He forgiveth iniquity, transgression and sin*: which three words do abundantly speak forth that there is no transgression which he will not pardon; there being but one particular amongst all that innumerable number of sins which lodgeth in the heart of fallen men, that he declared unpardonable: and there is none of our diseases that is above the infinite Art of Love, and concerning which we can take up that complaint, *There is no Balm in Gilead, and there is no Physician there*. And though Providence may muster up many impossibilities, yet let Faith take the Promise in the one hand, and impossibilities in the other, and

and desire God to reconcile them ; that if we cannot see any connexion between providence and the word, yet may we reflect upon the Omnipotency of God, that can make things that are seeming contrary, sweetly agree together; the Commentary will never destroy the Text, nor Providence will never destroy the faithfulness of God. And let me give you this Advice, that those Objections of Misbelief which you cannot answer, and in a manner putteth you to a *non plus*, and when ye have looked over all the *Names of GOD*, ye cannot find an answer to them, slight them and cover them as we have often told you, was the practice of believing *Abraham, Rom. 4. 19.* where that strong Objection of misbelief appearing before his eyes, *the deadness of his body, and the barrenness of Sarahs womb*, it is recorded of him, *he considered not these things*, as it were, he had a divine transition from the Objections of misbelief to the acting of Faith : And this is clear from *Matth. 15. 25, 26.* where that strong Objection of misbelief being proposed against that Woman, that she was not within the compass of Christs commission, she hath a noble way of answering with this, *Lord have mercy upon me.* And (if so we may speak) Faith hath a kind of divine impertinency in answering the Objections of misbelief, or rather a holy slighting of them that gaineth the victory, when cavilling with temptations will not do it : The like also may be instanced in his Sons Name : O how glorious Titles are given to that *Prince of the kings of the earth*, and to that *Plant of renown*, upon which the weakest Faith may cast anchor, and ride out the greatest storm. I shall not detain you long on this Subject ; but this we would have you know that there is no strait or difficulty that a Christian can be exposed unto, but there is some Name or Attribute of Christ that may sweetly answer that difficulty, and make up that disadvantage. If a Christian be exposed unto Afflictions and Troubles in a present World, let him comfort himself in this, that Christ is the shadow of a great Rock

in a wearied Land. Is a Christian under inward anxiety and vexation of mind, let him comfort himself in this, *that Christ is the God of peace and of all consolation.* Is a Christian under darkness and confusion of Spirit, let him comfort himself in this, *that Christ is the Father of light, and is the eternal Wisdom of God.* Is a Christian under the convictions of this, that he is under the power and dominion of his lusts, let him comfort himself in this, *that Christ is Redemption;* yet (that I stay no longer) if it were possible that a Christian could have a necessity that he could not find a name in Christ to answer it, he may lawfully frame a name to Christ out of any promise in all the Book of God, and he should find it forth coming for the relieving and making up of that necessity, God would not disappoint his expectation.

There is yet one thing further, in reference to the Object of Faith, which we shall desire you to take notice of; and it is the way of Faiths closing with its noble Object, and its resting on him; And this we conceive may be excellently taken up by our considering of the many several Names that Faith getteth in Scripture, beyond any other of the Graces of the Spirit. It called looking, *Isai. 45. 22. Look unto me.* It is called *abiding in Christ,* *Joh. 15. 4. Abide in me.* It is called a keeping silence unto God, *Psal. 3. 7. My Soul trust in God:* Or as the word is in the Original *My Soul be silent unto God;* and that in *Psal. 62. 1. My Soul waiteth;* Or as the word is, *Truly my soul is silent unto God.* Likewise, Faith is called a leaning, *Psal. 7. 15. I have leaned upon thee from my Mothers Womb.* Faith is called an eating of Christs flesh, *Joh. 6. 53. Faith is called a casting of our burden upon God,* *Psal. 55. 22. Cast your burden upon God:* And Faith, is called, *a coming unto God,* *Mat. 11. 28.* And according to these different names, there are seven noble properties, and matchless differences of this Grace of Faith; The first is, That this is this Grace by which a Christian doth enjoy much communion with God: Hence

It is called a *looking*; which importeth, that Faith is a continual contemplation of the immortal Soul, upon that precious and excellent object Jesus Christ. There is that second property of Faith; That it is that Grace by which a communion with God is maintained: Hence it is called an *abiding in God*. It is that grace which maketh Christ and the Believer to dwell together. The third property of Faith is, that it is a *submissive* grace; Hence it is called a *keeping silence unto God*; Faith as it were, it knoweth not what it is to repine; it is the noble excellency of Faith, it never knew what it was to misconstrue Christ, it is the noble excellency of Faith, it never knew what it was to pass an evil report upon Christ. Faith it will promise good things to a Christian in the darkest night for when Love asketh Faith that question, *Ijai. 21. 11, 12. Watchman, what of the night? Watchman what of the night? Or, when shall the Morning break?* Faith answereth it with the words that follow (only a little inverting the order) *The night cometh and also the morning*, the morning is approaching, that admitteth of no following night. There is that fourth property of faith, it is the Grace that keepeth a Christian in perseverance, by its building upon the Rock. Hence it is called a *leaning upon God*: For a Christian by Faith doth perpetually joyn himself to Christ, so that what ever trouble he be cast into by Faith, he cometh out of that wilderness leaning upon his beloved, and by Faith he is led up to the rock that is higher than he, where he may sit in safety, and even laugh at death and destruction, when assailing him. There is the fifth property of Faith: that it is the Grace that bringeth satisfaction unto the spiritual senses of a Christian, by a close and particular application of Christ as the nourishment of the Soul. Hence it is called an *eating of the Flesh of Christ*. There are three senses that Faith satisfieth: Faith satisfieth the sense of sight, it satisfieth the sense of taste, and it satisfieth the sense of touch: Faith it will make a Christian handle that eternal word

of

of Life : Faith it will make a Christian see *that noble plant of renown* : And Faith will make a Christian *taste and see how gracious the Lord is*. And no doubt, these that have once satisfied their sight, they will be longing to satisfy their taste. There is that sixth property of Faith, It is that grace which giveth rest unto a Christian : Hence it is called a *casting of our burden upon him* : It is as it were, the soul giving unto Christ that unsupportable yoke of our iniquities, and taking from Christ that easie and portable yoke of his Commandments. And seventhly, There is that last property of Faith ; it is that grace by which sanctification is promoted : Hence it is called a *coming to Christ* : It is the Soul in a divine motion and travelling from the Land of *Egypt* unto the Land of *Canaan* : Faith is the soul in a pleasant motion from the land of the north, the land of our captivity, unto the land of perfect liberty, all along going out by *the footsteps of the flock*, and walking in that new and living way even in him *who is the way, the truth and the Life*.

And now for a more full Application of this we shall speak but to two things further. 1. We would have it considered, that there are some that come unto the Covenant of Promise with less difficulty, and after a more divine and evangelick way, and there are some that close with Christ in a more difficult and legal way ; there are some that before they can come to mount Sion, they must dwell forty days at mount Sinai. There are some, before the decree of heaven shall be given to them, they must roar as an ox, and must cover themselves with sackcloth, having ashes upon their heads. We must be a *Benoni* before we be a *Benjamin* : that is, we must be a son of sorrow, before we can be a son of Consolation. But this is certain, that Christ leadeth sometimes some to himself through a valley of Roses : And I would only have you taking notice of these two, which though we conceive they be not infallible in the rule, yet oftentimes

mes experience maketh them out to be truth : That
 ere are three sorts of persons who are most ordina-
 ly brought under great terrours, ere they close with
 Christ. First, These who have committed some
 gross and abominable sin that is most contradicting un-
 to the light of nature. Secondly, That person that
 inneth much against light : before conversion. Hence
 it is observed in all the books of the Gospel, and in
 the Book of the *Acts*, there was more Gospel, and
 love in the way of converting the Gentiles, than was
 of converting the Jews, see *Acts* 2.27. There is a sharp
 Law exercised among them who had crucified the
 the Lord of Life : and *Acts* 9. Paul that had been a
 grievous persecuter, at his conversion, he is first stric-
 ten dead to the ground before he be made a captive
 to the Love of Christ, and constrained to cry out,
What wilt thou have me to do ? But look to *Acts* 8. and
 there ye will find a more fair and smooth way of be-
 getting sons to Christ. And thirdly, that person
 that is much in conceit of his own Righteousness,
 he useth to be brought to Christ through much ter-
 rour and exercise of the Law : that is clear in Paul,
 his condition also, *Phil.* 3. and *Act.* 9. compared,
 certainly, whosoever thinketh to come that length
 in self abasement, and will count as the Apostle doth
 in that Chapter, must dwell many days at Mount
 Sinai, and learn his Arithmetick there, 2. We would
 have you taking notice of this, that though the per-
 son that is brought to Christ in a more smooth and E-
 vangelick way, may have the prehemineny of the
 person that is brought to Christ after a more Legal
 and Terrible way in some things, yet we conceive
 that a Christian that is brought to Christ through
 much of the exercise of the Law, and through many
 of the Thundrings of Mount Sinai, after he hath
 won to see his right of Christ, he is much constant
 in the exercise of Faith ; and the reason of it is, be-
 cause that an ordinary ground of misbelief is our
 not distinct up-taking either of the time of our conver-

sion, which is oftentimes hid from these persons that are converted in a more Evangelick way, as likewise this, that those persons that are brought to Christ in a more Gospel Chariot, are sometimes put to debates, whether ever they were under the exercise of the Law, and this maketh them often (as it were) to raze the foundation, and to cry forth, *My hope, and my strength is perished from the Lord.* And now to shut up our discourse, we shall add this one word of exhortation; that ye would carefully lay hold upon that noble Object, and exercise your Faith upon him; and I shall say but this, that all these that have this noble Grace of Faith, and that are Heirs of that everlasting Inheritance: There is a fourfold Crown prepared for you, There is a Crown of Life that is prepared for him that shall fight that good fight of Faith; but what may you say is a Crown of Life, except we have joy waiting upon that Life; for what is Life without Joy, but a bitterness, and a burden to it self; Therefore ye shall have a Crown of Joy; but what were a Crown of Life, and a Crown of Joy, except we had the Grace of Holiness, and were compleat in that: Therefore ye shall have also a Crown of Righteousness: But what were Life, Joy and Righteousness, without Glory: Therefore, ye shall have likewise a Crown of Glory: But what of all these, if that Crown should once fall from our head, and we should be deprived of our Kingdom? Therefore, take this to make up all the rest, it is an eternal Crown of Glory. That word in Prov. 27. near the close, *The Crown, saith Solomon doth endure fore ever:* But this precious Crown that the hands of Christ fix upon the head of an overcoming Christian, this is the Motto that is engraven upon it, *Unchangeable and Eternal, Eternal and Unchangeable.* And O what a day suppose ye shall that be, when that precious Crown shall be put upon our heads? What think ye will be the difference betwixt Christ and the Believers in Heaven? They shall have these four Crowns

crowns which are indeed one: but Christ shall have upon his head many Crowns, according to that Word, *Rev. 19. 12.* But let me say one word also to you who are strangers from God, and are destitute of the Grace of Christ, and will not by Faith close with this excellent Object. There is a fourfold Crown that once shall be put upon your heads; but do not misinterpret the vision: There is difference betwixt the *Butler* and the *Baker*; Ye may prophesie good things to your selves, but there is a Crown of Death which ye shall once have put upon your Heads: ye shall be always dying, and yet never able to die: There is a Crown of sorrow that ye shall have put upon your heads, when ye shall eternally sigh forth that lamentation; *O to be annihilate and reduced unto nothing?* when the reduction of you unto nothing would be a Heaven, when ye shall be tormented in those everlasting Flames. And I would say thus by the way, ye will be all miserable and comfortless one to another there will be no ground of Consolation that ye shall reap, for the community of your sorrow shall increase the degrees of that sorrow; And there is another Crown also that ye shall put on, and that is a Crown of Sin, instead of that *Crown of Righteousness* would ye know your exercise. O ye that are predestinate unto these everlasting pains? Would ye know your exercise? It is this, ye shall eternally blaspheme and curse the God that made you. I am perswaded of this that the Terrours of Hell will afflict you more, and doth, than that of the sinning perpetually in Hell: Ye would think nothing many of you to be in Hell, if there were no pain there; for the exercise of sin it will be your delight and life: but be perswaded of it, that when your Conscience is awaked, the exercise of sinning shall exceedingly aggravate your pain. And there is this Crown lastly, that ye shall put on, and that is the *Crown of shame*: The Prophet *Isaiah* maketh mention of a *Crown of Pride*; but ye that have put one that Crown of everlasting confusion and

shame, when ye shall not be able to lift up your eyes to him, whom ye have pierced; I would faine desire you to know what will be your exercise at these three days, what will be your exercise when death shall be summonding you to remove and ye shall first be entered heere unto these everlasting pains; I am perswaded ye will reflect much: will ye not reflect upon many Sermons that ye have heard, wherein ye have been invited to partake of the sweet offers of Salvation: I remember of one that upon his Death-bed cryed forth, *A world for time, a world for one inch of time*, one that perhaps did hold his head high, and no doubt was greater than the greatest here, his Crown could not purchase one inch of time, but dying with this, *Call time again, call time again*; that petition was denyed, and so shall it be, I fear to the most part that are here. I think it was a pretty Hieroglyphick of the Egyptians, they painted time with three heads; The first head that pointed out time that was past, was a greedy Wolf gaping, which importeth this, That our Time past was mispent, and there was nothing left, but like a Wolf to gape for it again: And there was that second head of a roaring Lyon round, which imports the Time present, and for this end was so painted, that people might lay hold upon their present opportunities, otherwise it would be the mater of their ruine, and of their eternal undoing. And there was that last Head, which was a deceitful Dog fanning, which signifieth, that people may deceive themselves with the Time to come, thinking they will be religious at their Death, and that they will overcome at their death, but this is a flattery, no better than the fanning of a mad Dog. I think we may learn much of this, even to be provoked to lay hold upon our golden opportunities, that we sell not our time, but that we buy it. There are two things that a Christian must not sell, that is, sell not the Truth, but buy it, and sell not

not your Time, but by it: I am perswaded of this, that one moment of Time is worth ten thousand of worlds, if improved; And I would ask you what advantage shall ye have of all things that ye have tormented your selves about when time shall be no more, I suppose indeed this is an ordinary evil among the People of this Age, of which we have our own share and portion; There are many that envy Godliness, and the Godly, *The excellent ones that are in the Earth*, that think it pleasure to vent their malice against such, I know that ordinarily practice it is older by a thousand years than themselves, that they persecute Godliness under the name of Hypocrisie; They call Godliness, Hypocrisie, and upon that account they begin and speak maliciously against it; only I would ask you this question, what will you say in that day when Christ will ask that question at you, that Gideon asked at Zeba and Zalmunna, *who are these that ye killed with your tongue?* Must it not be answered, *Every one did resemble the person of a lying.* Will ye not believe? will ye not close with Christ? I know it is ordinary that we run upon these two extremes, Sometimes we do not believe the threatenings of the Law, and sometimes we will not believe the Promises of the Gospel. But I would only desire to know, what if it had been so ordered in the infinit wisdom of God, that all the Letters of this Book should have been threatenings; what should have been our lot; if all the Promises should have been scraped out of it? But certainly this must be your Lot, all the Promises of the Book of the Covenant shall be taken from you, and all the Curses thereof shall be a flying Roll, that shall enter within your Houses, and shall eternally there remain. Know this, O ye that are enemies to Christ, know it, and think upon it, *Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and with garments rolled in blood.* But that war that Christ shall have against the Hypocrites in Zion, and those that are ignorant of him, and will not close with Him, it shall be *with fewel of fire, and eternal indignation.*

dignation. O what will be your thoughts, suppose you when Christ shall come with that two edged sword of the fury of the Lord to enter to fight with you? It is no delightful exercise! O that ye were not almost altogether persuaded to be Christians, and that once Christ may conquer you with that two edged sword that proceedeth out of his mouth, that so you might subject your selves to Him, and make Him the Object of your Faith. Now to Him that hath engraven upon His vesture, and on his thigh, that he is the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, we desire to give Praise.

A S E R M O N

Concerning the Great SALVATION.

Heb. 2. 3. How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him,

THis everlasting Gospel, which is preached unto you, is that glorious Star, which must lead us to the place where blessed Christ doth ly. This Gospel, and glad tydings of this Great Salvation, is come near unto you; And Christ is standing at the everlasting doors of your Hearts, desiring that ye would open unto Him. There is that one great Request which Heaven, this day hath to present unto you, and it is, That ye would at last imbrace this Great salvation, freely offered by Him. It is the thing for which ye are called to mourn this day, that since the days of your Fathers, and since the beginning of your own days, ye have stopped your ears from that sweet and chaunting voice of this blessed Charmer, ye would never dance to to Christ when he piped, neither would ye weep to him when he lamented.

But to come to the words which we have read unto you, The Apostle in the former Chapter hath been dis-

discourſing moſt divinely of the matchleſs and incomparable excellencies which are in our bleſſed Lord Jeſus; And in the firſt verſe of this ſecond Chapter, he draweth forth an exhortation from his former Doctrine which in ſhort is this, That They would take heed to the Bleſſed doctrine of the Goſpel; *And not at any time to let it ſlip out of our minds*, and that they would keep his Goſpel as a Jewel of Great price, and would not ſell it, but that they would be induced to buy it. And this Exhortation he preſſeth by two Arguments

The Firſt Argument is in the ſecond verſe, where he ſaith, *If the word ſpoken by Angels was ſteadfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience received a juſt recompence of reward &c.* That is, if the tranſgreſſion of the Law, which was delivered by the Miniſtery of Angels, and every diſobedience to it was ſo ſeverely puniſhed. Let that provock you to take heed, that ye tranſgreſs not the precious Goſpel which was ſpoken by the Lord himſelf.

The ſecond Argument is in the words which we have read unto you, and it is taken from the certain and infallible ſtroak of the Juſtice of God, which ſhall come upon thoſe who ſlight this Great Salvation, It is impoſſible (ſaith he) that there can be a city of refuge for thoſe who ſlight this *Great Salvation*.

Now in the words which we have read, there are theſe ſix things to be conſidered.

I. Firſt, That is an evil incident to the hearers of this precious Goſpel and Great Salvation, to ſlight and undervalue it, This is clearly preſuppoſed in the words otherwiſe there had been no ground, or ſceſs for the apoſtle to threaten ſo terrible things againſt the ſlighters of it.

II. The ſecond thing to be conſidered in the words is, That the ſtroak and ruine of thoſe who ſlight this Great ſalvation, is certain, and infallible, it will ſurely come upon them: This is clear from theſe words, *How ſhall we eſcape?* As if he had ſaid, there is no imaginable way for us to eſcape, if we neglect (this) ſo

Great Salvation We may have a city of refuge when we are pursued by the Law; or, when we are pursued by afflictions, and we may escape when we are pursued otherwise by the Justice of God; but if once we slight this Great Salvation, there remaineth no city of refuge (no door of escape left open) unto us: for where will the person flee that slighteth this Great Salvation?

III. There is a third thing whereof we shall take notice from the words, That the stroke of the Justice of God cometh justly upon them who slight this Great Salvation; and truly it is a most equal and reasonable stroke, which is also clear from the words, *How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?* where he puts it home to their Consciences, as if he had said, think ye not that it is just and righteous that (if ye slight this Great Salvation) there should not be a door of escape left open unto you? He putteth the question home to their Conscience to answer, *yea, or no,*

IV. The fourth thing to be considered in the words, is this, That the slighting this Great Salvation is a sin that hath many aggravations, which attend and wait upon it. And it hath two aggravations from the words, which I have read; The first great aggravation in that word of the Text, *Great Salvation* as if he had said, if it were not a Great Salvation, ye might have some cloak or excuse for your slighting of it: but seeing it is such a great and eternal Salvation, there is now no cloak left for your sin. The second aggravation is from the certainty of this Salvation, in these words, *Which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by those that heard him, viz. his Apostles,* whereby he telleth them, this Great Salvation is no notion nor fancy, but a most certain, sure, and real Salvation, which yet they slight.

V. The fifth thing whereof we shall take notice from the words, is this, That there are no persons (be who they will, Minister or People) who slight this Great Salvation, that shall have a door of escape; Hence it is, that the apostle putteth himself among the rest, say-
ing,

ing, How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation? That is, How shall I Paul escape, if I neglect so great Salvation, and so frustrate the grace of God?

VI. Sixthly, We would take notice of this from the words, That not only heart-dissing of this Great Salvation, but even also the neglecting of it, hath a certain infallible and unspeakable ruine attending upon it.

Now before we speak to any of these six things (which we have observed from the words.) There are these two things whereunto we shall speak a little for clearing of the words. First, What is meant here by Great Salvation; Secondly, How it is said that Christ was the first Preacher of it.

First, we conceive, that by the Great Salvation, is understood the Gospel, as is clear, Eph. 1. 13. Where it is called the Gospel of our salvation, and Acts 13. 26. it is called the word of this salvation; So that by the Word of this Salvation is understood the Gospel, and these Precious offers which are contained in it. And we conceive, it may be called a great Salvation, in these eight respects.

I. First, It is called the Great Salvation, in respect of the price that was laid down for it; There being no less price laid down to purchase this Great Salvation, than the blood of the Son of God. From whence then doth Salvation flow unto you? It comes running to you in a stream of the Blood of the Son of God. This is clear, Heb. 9. 12. Neither by the blood of goats and Calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, obtained eternal redemption for us.

I I. Secondly, it is called a Great Salvation, in respect of the many difficulties and oppositions which he had in the way of bringing it about. What great impediments (suppose ye) lay in Christs way, before he could accomplish and bring about this great Salvation? Was not the Justice of God to be satisfied? Was he not to die, and be made like unto one of us? Was he not to ly in the Grave? And was he not to bear the torments of Hell, before this great Salvation could be

accomplished and brought to pass? There were such impediments in the way of bringing about this Great Salvation, that if all the Angels in Heaven had been set to the work, they had been all crushed under it, had it been but that one great impediment, to *satisfie the Justice*, and pacifie the wrath of God, even that was a pass, through which none could go, but the eternal Son of God; It was so guarded that none durst adventure to enter it (much less could any win through it) save he only, *who was mighty to save.*

III. Thirdly, it is called a Great Salvation, in respect of that high estimation which the Saints have of it. O what an high estimation have the Saints of this Gospel Salvation? There is no mercy which they think comparable to this, all other mercies are but little *Zwarts* in comparison of this Great Mercy, and Gospel Salvation.

IV. Fourthly, it is called a Great Salvation in respect of these noble effects, which this Salvation bringeth about, and produceth. Some of the great effects of the Gospel, David hath cleared, *Psal. 19. 7, 8, 9, 10.* Is not this a great effect, (of this Gospel Salvation) to bring us out of Nature into an estate of Grace? And that is an effect of this Great Salvation: is not this a great effect, to make us who were Enemies, to become Friends? And that is an effect of this Great Salvation? Is not this a great effect, to make us who were moving in the way to Hell, move in the way to Heaven? And that is an effect of this great Salvation: Is not this a great effect to make us who were far off, to be now made near? And yet this is the effect of this Great Salvation. And is not that a great effect to make us who were darkness, to become light in the Lord? And that is the great effect of this Gospel Salvation? Yea I may say, time would fail me to tell of the great effects of this Great Salvation? But O will ye come and see, and that will best resolve the question unto you, what the noble effects of this Great Salvation are.

V. Fifthly, it is called a Great salvation, in respect

of the great advantages which redound to the person who embraceth it. First, Is not Heaven a noble advantage? and that is the gain, which attendeth the imbracers of this Great Salvation. Secondly, Is not Jesus Christ a notable advantage? and yet he is the advantage which attendeth the imbracers of this Great Savation. Thirdly, Is not eternal communion with God a notable advantage? And that advantage attendeth the imbracers of this Great Salvation. Fourthly, Is not eternal Liberation from the body of Death, a great advantage? And that attendeth the imbracers of this Great Salvation. Fifthly, Is not eternal singing in the enjoyment of God a great advantage? and that attendeth the imbracers of this Salvation. Sixthly, Is not eternal seeing of God as he is, a great and noble advantage? And yet this (as all the former) attendeth the imbracers of this Great Salvation. Would ye be honourable? Come and embrace this Great Salvation. Would ye be eternally happy? O then come and partake of this Great Salvation.

V I. Sixthly, It is called a Great Salvation in respect of all other Salvations that ever were accomplished. There was never a Salvation, or victory obtained by any General or Captain (unto a Land or People) that could have the name of Great Salvation in comparison of this.

V I I. Seventhly, It is called a Great Salvation, in respect of the Authority of it. We have spoken of the greatness (as to the meritorious cause) of it, and how great things it doth effectuate; and also in respect of the authority of it, it is a Great Salvation. Would ye know who is the author of this Great Salvation. It is Christ, *Heb. 5. 9. He became the Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obeyed him.* And must not this Salvation be suitable to him who is the Author of it. This is the most noble and irradiant beam of the Majesty of the Son of God the Mediator, that he is the Author of this Great Salvation.

V I I I. Eightly, It is called a Great Salvation, in respect

respect of the continuance and duration of it. It is not a Salvation which is but for a day : but it is an eternal Salvation. *Heb. 9. 12.* He obtained eternal redemption for us.

Now the second thing whereunto we shall speak, for clearing of the words, is this, *viz.* How it is said, That Christ was the first Preacher of this eternal Salvation? We do not think that the words are thus to be understood, that the Gospel, and this Great Salvation was never preached before Christ came in the flesh? but we think the meaning of the words may be one of these three, if not all of them.

I. First, That all the Preaching of this Great Salvation under the Law, did come very far short in the point of fulness, in comparison of Christs preaching of it; Therefore is Christ said to be the first preacher of this Great Salvation: As if he had said, *I know Adam he preached of this Great Salvation: And Enoch, he preached of this Great Salvation: And the twelve Patriarchs, they preached of this Great Salvation: And all the Prophets who went before Christ, and are now in Heaven, they preached of this Great Salvation; But all their preaching deserved not the name of preaching, in comparison of Christ: for, never man spoke as he spoke. Thus Christ was the first great preacher of this Great Salvation.*

II. Secondly, This may be the meaning of it, that Christ was the first preacher of this great salvation, in respect of his clear way of preaching of it: for he was the first preacher of it without Types and Shadows, he was the first preacher of it clearly and fully, with so much demonstration and power of the Spirit.

III. Thirdly, The meaning of this (that Christ was the first preacher of this great salvation) may relate to his appearing to Adam in Paradise, when he became the first and great preacher of this great salvation, when he did speak that word unto him, *The Seed of the Woman shall tread down the head of the serpent.* The first glorious preaching of this great salvation was, when Christ preached

preached it to Adam in Paradise. And that was the first and glorious morning of this blessed Gospel.

Now we shall speak a little to the first of these six things which we observed from the words, viz.

That there are many within the visible Church, who are neglecters and slighers of this great Salvation; (do you not all take with it?) It is clear, *Mat. 23.* towards the close, and *Chap. 23. 5.* Where these persons being invited to come to the Marriage, or Feast of the Gospel, it is said of them, *They made light of it.* Which are the same words in our Text. And *Luke 14. 18.* When they were invited to come it is said, *They all with one consent began to make their excuse.* And *Isa. 28. 2.* *This is the rest wherewith ye shall make the weary to rest, this is the refreshing, yet they will not hear.* Now is there a person here who dar deny this Charge, that he is a sligher of this Great Salvation? I confess, I am afraid that ye will not take with it; Therefore I shall propose eight sorts of Persons who are slighers of this great salvation. And I charge you, as ye will answer to God one day, that ye search your Hearts, whether ye be among the number (in the Catalogue) of the slighers of this great salvation.

1. The first sort of Persons, who are slighers of this great salvation, are these persons who go about to establish their own righteousness, and will not submit to the righteousness of Christ (in a word) it is that sort of persons, who think they may win to Heaven by a Covenant of Works, and will not take the Gospel's way of travelling to Heaven in the Covenant of Grace. And surely there is not a Person here, who have not that cursed inclination to be as little obliged to Christ (for his salvation) as he can. We would go to Heaven without the Way, which is Christ. And (believe me) there are many in this Congregation who go thus about to establish their own righteousness. And, I shall propose six sorts of persons who shall fall under the first rank.

1. The first sort are these who trust on their own civility, and think these will carry them to Heaven.

These

These are the persons who go about to establish their own righteousness. Say they, I defy the World to say any thing to me, *I was evermore an honest man*, and trust therefore that I shall go to Heaven; But I say to thee, (O Atheist that thou art) thou shalt never win to Heaven by these means, till thou come to Christ with this, *All my righteousness is as filthy rags.*

2. The second sort are these, who build their confidence upon their denial of their good Works, but yet come not this length to make use of Jesus Christ.

3. The third sort are these, who build their confidence upon their Duties; They think they will come to Heaven by their good Prayers, by their Reading, and by their Fasting, (like unto that Pharisee, *Luke 18. 11. I thank God, I am not like other men: for I fast twice in the week, I pay tithes of all that I possess;*) But I say unto thee, thy Duties will never bring thee to Heaven, if Christ be not at the end of all thy Duties, nor can ye perform any Duty without him.

4. The fourth sort of persons who fall under this first rank of slights of the Great Salvation, are those who trust on their own convictions. If they have once been convinced of their sin and miserable estate, they think there is no more to do, Christ will never reject them, so they sit down and build their hope upon these convictions.

5. The fifth sort of persons are these, who build their confidence upon their resolutions. Say they, oftentimes have I resolved to be a better man than I am: therefore I think (which is the fearful delusion of many) that God will accept the will for the deed: But it had been good for many, such a word had not been in the Bible, or that their cursed eyes had never read it. But know this, that though thou hast as strong resolutions as Peter, or as good wishes as Balaam had, if thou never labour to bring them to practice, God shall say unto thee, *Depart from me, I know you not.* Any of you who build upon your resolutions, ye build upon a sandy foundation, these being many times a goodness, but like the morning dew;

6. And

6. And the sixth sort of persons who fall under the first rank of slighers of this Great Salvation, (and wherein the evil is most subtle) are these who build their Salvation upon their Graces; these also go about to establish their own righteousness. But I say to thee, Thy Graces cannot be the foundation of thy Hope, although they may be as evidences to strengthen thy hope. Now are there none here who fall under this first rank of slighers of this Great Salvation; or are there none here who will confess that they have gone about to establish their own righteousness? I say to thee, who will confess, put a rope about thy neck, and come to Christ; for he is a merciful King; I say to thee, come to Christ with this, *All my righteousness is like filthy rags*: And if thou wilt come with this in sincerity, he shall say, *Bring forth the white robe, and put it upon him*: If thou canst be brought to speak that in sincerity to Christ, there shall be no more betwixt Christ and thee. But, *Come and cloath him with the white robe*.

2. Secondly, These persons slight the Great Salvation, who delay their taking hold of the precious offers of the Gospel: for there are many (when we preach this Gospel, and when we hold out the Great Salvation unto them) who say, *I will follow Christ, but I must first go home and bury my father*; and so they delay to take hold of this Great Salvation: But I say to you (whoever ye be) that thus delay to take hold on this Great Salvation, ye are the slighers of it. Is there a person within these doors, who dare but acknowledge that he hath slighted this Great Salvation, and delay to imbrace it? O tell me! What do your consciences speak? Are there any but they must acknowledge they come under the second rank? And I say to you, who have thus delayed, will ye yet imbrace it? I say even unto you who are old men (now past sixty years, and have slighted this Great Salvation so long) yet this day this Great Salvation is offered unto you? What say you to it? O what say you to this offer? Are ye saying I must now delay (and not receive this Great Salvation)

vation) till my Harvest be by, and over? I say unto thee, that the harvest of the wrath of God is ripe, and he shall put in his sickle, and cut thee down. I say no more to thee who thus slight this Great Salvation, but this, *Why stand ye all the day in the Meropis plain, and doing nothing.* O will ye at last be induced to take and embrace this Great Salvation, before it be hid from your eyes.

III. Thirdly, These persons are the flighters of this Great Salvation, who complement with Christ, when they are invited to come and partake of it: And say silently to the Minister, (or rather to their own Consciences) *I pray you have me excused at this time, as these,* Luke 14. 18. But I would only ask at such, have ye any lawful excuse, why ye will not come and partake of this Great Salvation? Is there any person here that hath any lawful excuse to present? I shall never take this off your hands, *Have me excused;* But be sure of this, it shall never excuse you but accuse you. Therefore I desire that these persons, who have slighted this Great Salvation, by complementing with Christ, that they would complement no more with him at all, but now embrace it.

IV. The fourth sort of persons who slight this Great Salvation, are these who give way to discouragement and unbelief, so that they will not come and partake of this great Salvation, I say such of you are flighters of it, and Christ will esteem you such. Oh if ye knew the worth and vertue of this Great Salvation, there would not be a temptation you could meet with, that would hinder you from embracing it, but if thou could not answer these Temptations, thou wouldst own them. I say unto such undervaluers and flighters of the Great Salvation as discouraged persons, (*And these who they long to be placed at the breaking forth of Chaldeans*) that when ye cannot answer your Objections, which hinder you from closing with Christ, I intreat you disown them, as if ye heard them not: Say ye, Think ye this lawful? I say, it is both lawful and expedient

edient, for it was the practice of believing *Abraham*, who considered not his own body, being dry, as an old sick, or the deadness of *Sarah's* womb. He did not consider these things which might have been Objections to keep him from believing. He might have started at these two Objections. Alas, I am old, and that objection could he not answer: And my wife is past child-bearing, neither could he answer that objection. What then did he with them? He slighted them both, and considered them not. *Secondly*, I would say this to you, who thus slight it because of discouragements: If ye did know the worth of the Great Salvation, which is in this Gospel Redemption, that is offered unto you, although ye had an Army of Objections to go through, ye would go through them all, To get a drink of the water of this well of *Bethlehem*.

V. The fifth sort of persons who slight this Great Salvation, are these who will not do so much as take care, and give pains to hear this great Salvation offered unto them; for there are some persons (who if they come to the Church) desire to sit farthest off, and so never take care to hear a word of this Great Salvation: And are such dreadful slighers of it, like unto these mentioned, *Jer. 6. 10.* To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken. *Isa. 23. 2.* But they would not hear. *Jer. 7. 10.* Who says, we are delivered to all these abominations; yet they did come and stand before him, in the house which was called by his Name.

VI. Sixthly, These persons are slighers of this Great Salvation, who, (when they hear it) are more, nay not so much affected with it, than if we were reading unto them the most senseless History of *Thomas the Rhymer*, or some other old Fable; like unto these mentioned, *Jer. 6. 10.* The word of the Lord is unto them a reproach, they have no delight in it. I would pose you all as in the sight of the Author of this Great Salvation, (men or women) did you ever set your selves (or took ye ever pains) to bring up your hearts to the love

love of this Great Salvation? was it ever the rejoicing of your hearts that Christ died and rose again? I do certainly believe it (and I am perswaded) that there are Decrees past in Heaven against many of you *That in hearing ye shall hear, but not understand; and in seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:* For God hath made your hearts harder than the Flint or Adamant; so that ye shall refuse to return when he doth exhort you. Believe me, (if I may so speak) I think that there is as much probability that the stones of the Wall would hear (if we would speak to them) as soon as many of you.

VII. Seventhly, These persons are flighters of the Great Salvation, who did never complain that they wanted a right to this Great Salvation. I hope some of you are now convinced that ye never came within the compass of this Great Salvation: I say yet unto you, if ye did never spend an hour in secret weeping and lamenting, because ye had not a right to this Gospel-Redemption, it is but too probable you never yet had a right to it. Yea, know it, that such of you would little care to let precious Christ depart without any grief of heart; I think if this were voiced within this House to day, whether or not shall Christ go and depart? I doubt if there would be many heart dissenters, though many Tongue dissenters: Oh, I fear there would be many hearts here, saying, O Christ, depart and go thy way: yea there are many *Gadarenes* here, who prefer their kine and swine to precious Christ, and would beseech him to go out of their Coasts.

VIII. Eightly, These persons slight the Great Salvation, who never took pains to engage their hearts to take hold of Christ and the Gospel, Christ is near to you this day: The Great Salvation is near to you, and is now, even now offered unto you; Therefore are there any who will take pains to lay hold on it? I obtest you all who are here, by the beauty and excellency of him who is the Author of this great Salvation, that ye come and partake of it; I obtest you by all the

the joys of Heaven, that ye embrace this Great Salvation: *I obtest you*, by all terrours in Hell, that ye embrace it: *I obtest you*, by the promises of the everlasting Covenant, that ye embrace it: *I obtest you*, by all the curses that are written in this Book of the Covenant; that ye embrace it: *I obtest you*, by the love that ye owe to your immortal Souls, that ye would once be wise, and come and partake of this Great Salvation: May I now have it, sayest thou? Yea, I say unto all, ye may have it to day, ye may be partakers of it before ye go hence: And so before I proceed any further, I do in the Name and Authority of him who sent me here to day, (and is the Author of this Great Salvation) freely offer it unto you; Therefore take it off my hand, embrace this Great Salvation offered to you to day; But I know there will be eight sorts of humours within this house to day. In relation to this Great Salvation, which is now offered unto you.

1. I think there will be some of *Gallio's* disposition here to day, that will care for none of these things; Yea, there are many here who will not give a fig for the rich offer of the Great Salvation; But, I say, cursed be that person who puts on *Gallio's* temper (to day) that will care for none of these things.

2. I fear there will be many of *Pilates* humour here (to day) who will say, they find nothing against the man; yet will cry forth, *Take him and crucifie him*: They find no fault with Christ, and yet will be content that he be crucified. Now can ye say any thing against Christ, who is the Author of this Great Salvation? Produce your strong arguments, are there any here who have any thing to say against him? I am here to answer in his Name: I hope there is not one here who hath any thing to say against the Author of this Great Salvation; And why then do ye not take him? See unto your selves, that there be none of *Pilates* humour here to day, that will cry out, *Ye find nothing in Christ why he should not be received*, and yet will be content that he be crucified.

3. There

3. There will be many of the Jews here to day who cry forth, *Away with Christ, away with Christ, and give me Barabbas.* But Oh! what a hellish word that, *away with Christ, away with transcendent Christ, and give us the world?* Now are there any here who will be so gross flighers of this Great Salvation. Will ye slight this Great Salvation, and embrace your Idols, which shall once prove a crown of thorns unto you?

4. There will be some of Felix's humour found here to day, that will say, *O Christ, go away at this time, and I will hear thee at a more convenient season.* But, I say unto you who will not hear me to day, nor embrace this Great Salvation, I shall defy all the Ministers in Scotland to assure you, that ye shall get another offer, if ye send me away to day. There is not one that can, or dar engage, that the Great Salvation shall be in your offer any more. Therefore I say, let none of Felix temper be here to day, that will say, *They will hear Christ at a more convenient season.*

5. There will be some of Balaam's temper (to day) who will desire to die the death of the righteous, and to have their last end like his; yet they desire not to live the life the righteous. But I say unto you, ye shall never die the death of the righteous, if ye live not the life of the righteous.

6. There will be some of you here (to day) who (I hope) at least will be of Agrippa's humour, that will say, *Thou hast almost perswaded me to be a Christian.* I say unto thee, O wilt thou quickly out with that word, *almost*, and put in that word *altogether*, and say, *O precious Christ, Thou hast altogether perswaded me to be a Christian.* However, if thou come no greater length, I intend thee come this length, that so thou may cry out, *I am almost perswaded to embrace Christ the Great Salvation.* and it may be ere long ye will come further.

7. There will be some of Judas's temper here (to day) who will betray Christ for thirty pieces of silver; Yea, some would sell Christ, Heaven, their Idols and all for less than thirty pieces of silver.

8. I think there will be many of Esau's prophane
 temper here (to day) *Who will sell their birth-right for
 a mess of pottage.* Now will ye enquire at your selves,
 am I the person that will give *my birth-right for a mess
 of pottage?* Doth my heart say, *I will sell my birth-right,
 because I am hungred, and ready to die?* What will it profit
 me, give me a mess of pottage, and I will quit my birth-
 right? I know it, there are not a few such here to day;
 therefore I intreat you, enquire at your selves what
 your humour. Oh shall the Great Salvation that
 we have slighted so long, be slighted this day also,
 and shall there be none to embrace it? Oh enquire, and
 stand in aw, lest the wrath of the most High pursue
 you.

Now I shall give you these seven considerations,
 which may provock you not to slight (but embrace)
 this Great Salvation.

I. The first consideration, That the not embracing
 of this Great Salvation is one of the greatest acts of fol-
 ly that can be, *Jer. 8. 9. They have rejected the word of the
 Lord: (and immediately it is subjoyned) And, what
 wisdom is in them?* And so Solomon doth assure you they
 cannot be wise who neglect this Great Salvation, *Prov.
 1. 7. Fools despise wisdom and instruction.* Therefore may
 I not say unto you, be who ye will (though ye were
 the greatest heads of wit in all this place) ye are but
 stark fools as long as ye neglect this. But would ye be
 wise indeed, and wise unto eternal life, then I intreat
 you come and embrace this Great Salvation.

II. The second Consideration, to provock you not
 to slight the Great Salvation, is this, That the ruine
 and destruction of the slighers of it is most certain
 and infallible, *Jer. 11. 11. Where speaking of slighting
 the Covenant, which is indeed the same great Salvati-
 on, there is a Therefore put in the Threatning: There-
 fore thus saith the Lord, I will bring evil upon them, which
 they shall not be able to escape.* I defy you all who are the
 slighers of this Great Salvation, to find a back-door
 when Justice shall pursue you. For there is no door
 to

to escape, if ye embrace not this Great Salvation: But *The earth will disclose your iniquity, and Heaven will declare your sin.*

III. Thirdly, Let this Consideration provock you not to slight this Great Salvation, that Christ is exceeding serious, and earnest that ye would embrace it. And I think that, *Isa. 28. 23* speaketh out this exceeding seriousness: where four times he beggeth of his Hearers, that they would give ear and hear his voice (saying) *Give ear, and hear my voice, hearken, and hear my speech.* What needeth all these exhortations? But that Christ is most serious, that they would embrace the Great Salvation. And O that there were a person here (to day) as serious to the bargain as Christ is! But, be who ye will that slight this great Salvation, (believe me) the day is coming wherein ye shall cry out, alas for the slighting of it. Wilt thou therefore think presently with thy self (O thou slighter of this Great Salvation) what wilt thou say of thy slighting of it, when the Devil shall be leading thee in thorow these dark gates of Hell? O slighter of the Gospel, how many alaces wilt thou cry, when thou shalt be passing thorow these dark Gates into thy everlasting Prison? Wilt thou not then cry out, (O me, slighter of the everlasting Salvation) whither am I now going? Alas, now for my slighting of the Gospel: And as thou passest thorow, thou shalt meet with numbers of miserable comforters. There is not one in that Prison that can comfort thee: But many dreadful alaces shall thou then both cry and hear, if thou embrace not this Great Salvation.

IV. Fourthly, Let this provock you not to slight the Great Salvation, that ye will get it for a very look. O ye within this house to day, ye will get this Great Salvation for one look, *Isa. 45. 20. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.* For a very look ye will get this Great Salvation: and do ye ever think to get Heaven at a lower rate?

V. The fifth Consideration, to provock you not to slight

Light this Great Salvation any more, is this, There is not one of you who is a sligher of it, but your slighting of it shall increase your immortal bonds; Man or Woman, be who thou wilt, when thou art slighting this Great Salvation, thou art but plating a cord wherewith to bind thy Soul eternally in these unquenchable flames, *Isai. 28. 22. Be ye not mockers, lest your bonds be made strong.* I say therefore unto you, *Old men, mock not, lest your bonds be made strong: Old Women, near unto your Graves, mock not, lest your bonds be made strong. Young men, be ye not mockers, lest your bonds be made strong. Young women, who are in the flower of your time, mock not, lest your bonds be made strong.* But now alas, will there (for all this) be a person here to day who will be a mocker of this Great Salvation.

VI. The sixth Consideration, to provock you not to slight this Great Salvation any more, is this, Ye know not but that your days may be near a close: I say, ye know not, but the day of the preaching of this Great Salvation may be near a close. What knowest thou O man or woman, but this shall be the last Sermon that ever thou shalt hear concerning this Great Salvation? And yet for all this, shall we be sent away without one consent to embrace or receive it? O will ye be perswaded to look to Christ, and so to take him.

VII. The seventh Consideration, to provock you not to slight the Great Salvation, is this, that there is a five-fold Salvation comprehended under this Great Salvation.

I. The first is this, come and partake of this Great Salvation, and thou shalt have Salvation from thy Idols: and hereby I do proclaim liberty (this day) unto captives. I am sent forth (this day) with the keys of your Prison-house, to open your prison doors unto you, if ye will embrace this Great Salvation. I say unto you, *O ye Prisoners, come forth and shew yourselves;* for the keys of your Prison-house are with us, to open your Prison-doors unto you, therefore O come

come forth and embrace this Great Salvation. Will there be any (shall I think) here that will refuse to come forth? O! go forth, and flee from the land of your captivity, and from the house of your bondage.

II. Thou shalt have Salvation from thy darkness and from thy ignorance? I say unto you who understand no more of GOD than the stones of the Wall, I command you to come forth, and partake yet of this Great Salvation; and unto you shall light arise, even the day-spring from on high shall visit you.

III. If ye will come and partake of this Great Salvation, ye shall have deliverance from all your fears. Dost thou fear that thou shalt be poor? come and partake of this Great Salvation, and thou shalt be delivered from it: Art thou afraid of Hell? come and partake of this Great Salvation, thou shalt be delivered from that fear. Art thou afraid of the wrath of God? Then come (I say) and partake of this Great Salvation, and thou shalt have Redemption from that, and all thy fears; with him is plentiful Redemption, and he can make thee quiet from the fear of evil.

IV. If thou wilt come and partake of this Great Salvation, thou shalt have deliverance from all thy anxieties, and from all thy cares: ye are now careful and anxious about many things; come and partake of the Great Salvation, and it will make you careful but only for the one thing necessary.

V. If ye will come and embrace this Great Salvation offered unto you this day, ye shall be helped before ye go hence to sing that Song, O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? Now, O will ye come and embrace this Great Salvation, And ye shall be more than conquerors through Christ who loveth you: Are there therefore any here to day that would have victory over the Devil, and over their own hearts? Then come and embrace this Great Salvation, and then your victory is certain.

But

But now to press home this Great Salvation upon you a little further, there are nine sorts of persons, who are invited to come and partake of this Great Salvation offered this day : And I charge you answer to your Names when ye are called, and delay not to come.

I. First, I invite and call here, to day, all who are willing to come and embrace this Great Salvation. Now, are there any of you here to day, who are called *willing* ? Then I invite you to come and embrace this Great Salvation, Rev. 22. 17. *Whosoever will, let him come.* But Oh, are there none here to day who are named *willing* ? I intreat you, if there be any, do not deny your name, but come when ye are called and embrace this Great Salvation.

II. Secondly, These persons who thirst for it, are invited to come, and partake of this Great Salvation, Rev. 22. 17. *Let him that is a thirsty come.* Now if there be any here who are named *thirsty*, let them come and partake of this Great Salvation, and they shall be satisfied.

III. Thirdly, Are there any Moneyless folk here to day ? Let them come and partake of this Great Salvation. Are there no Moneyless folk here to day ? I mean not that Money or Coyn in your Purses, but want ye Money ? That is, want ye Righteousness ? Then I pray you, come and partake of this Great Salvation. I say, are ye so poor, that ye have nothing but the fear of Hell ? Then I pray you come : If there be any here who have nothing to commend them to Christ but necessity ; I say unto all such, O come, come, and partake of this Great Salvation.

IV. Fourthly, These persons are invited to come, (and I wish there were many such) who are *weary* ; but Oh ! are there none here to day who are called *weary* ? Are ye not weary in pursuit of your sins ? If there be any such here to day ? I say unto you, O weary folk, come, come, come, and partake of this Great Salvation.

Salvation, and of this excellent Gospel Redemption that was purchased at so dear a rate.

V. Fifthly, These who are heavy loaden, are invited to come, (and I think all of you may answer to this Name,) are ye *heavy loaden*? O then come. But are there none here who are heavy loaden with sin, with misery, and estrangement from God? If there be any such here, I say unto thee, old man, or young man, be who thou wilt, O come, and partake of this Great Salvation.

VI. Sixthly, Are there any here to day, who are called blind? I say, if there be any of you who think ye want eyes to see the precious excellencies of Christ, I invite you to come and partake of this Great Salvation.

VII. Seventhly, Are there any who are called lame here to day? I say unto such, O *come, come, come*, and partake of this Great Salvation: For we are sent forth to day, to call in the blind and the maimed, and the lame, that they may come and imbrace this Great Salvation. Therefore are there none here to day who may be called such: Are ye neither blind nor lame? I hope many of you will not deny that ye are such; Therefore I say unto you, O *blind, halt, and maimed, come, come*, and partake of this Great Salvation.

VIII. The eight sort of persons invited, are these who are *sick*; therefore if there be any sick folk here to day, be who ye will, I say unto you, O *come*, and partake of this Great Salvation, *For the whole need not the Physician, but the sick.*

IX. Ninthly, Are there any here to day who know not their Name, or their Condition, I say unto you O nameless folk, come and partake of this Great Salvation, come to Christ for the knowledge of your Souls Condition, come as a nameless one, and he shall not reject thee, though thy case were so evil that thou could not give it a name; for, *Of all that come unto him he sendeth none away.*

Now where do you find your name and surname? O do ye not know it? I hope you may know it; therefore I intreat you to answer to it, and so come away and partake of this Great Salvation.

But I am afraid there be many strong iron bars in the way of some of you, which ye cannot win over. Ah, how fast are some Souls locked in Satans snare? And therefore I shall speak a little for discovering of these bars, that hinder from imbracing this Great Salvation, that so ye may be the better helped to remove them.

I. The first great iron bar which keepeth folk from imbracing this Great Salvation, is the bar of ignorance; and I am afraid, that this (as a mighty bar) hindereth many of you; ye are ignorant of your selves, and of the condition of your Souls, ye are ignorant of the Law, and of its severity, and ye are ignorant of the precious Gospel in its condescendency. O pray unto God, that for Christ's sake, he would break that great bar of ignorance; for till that be done, Christ may take up that complaint, *Jer. 5. 4. Surely they are foolish, they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgement of their God.* I say, this bar of ignorance keepeth you from embracing this Great Salvation.

II. The second bar which keepeth many from closing with Christ, is the bar of *presumption*, for some will cry out, what need have I to imbrace the Great Salvation? Have I it not already? But I say unto thee, O fool, thou art (by all appearance) yet in bondage. O that this evil bar of presumption were put away; for it is one of the greatest impediments which lyeth in the way of your imbracing this Great Salvation that is in your offer to day; therefore I say unto you, if you will come no further. I intreat you come this length, to confess that ye want this Gospel Salvation, and that ye are indeed strangers to this Redemption purchased by Christ.

III. The third bar that keepeth persons from imbracing

bracing this Great Salvation, is the bar of *unbelief*, ye believe not what we say to you anent this Great Salvation. I know that some of you are of the Stoicks and Epicures humour, who cry out, *What meaneth this Man? He seemeth to be the setter forth of some strange gods.* But I say unto you, I am not the setter forth of any strange god, but it is Jesus of *Nazareth* whom I preach unto you. Alas, some of you thinketh this Great Salvation to be some morning dream, or some golden Fancy: but I say unto you, it is neither a Dream nor Fancy; but a real Truth that we preach unto you.

IV. The fourth bar that keepeth persons from imbracing of this Great Salvation, is the bar of *discouragement*: This strong bar keepeth many so fast, that they cannot imbrace this Great Salvation though it be freely offered unto them. I shall say no more to you, who are these, but counsel you to do as these four lepers did, *1 Kings 7. 4, Who sat at the gate of Samaria, who said, why sit we here till we die? if we say we will enter into the City, then the famine is in the City, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall in to the host of the Syrians, if they save us alive, we shall live, and if they kill us, we shall but die.* Even so say I unto you, that if ye abide in the state of unbelief, ye shall surely be undone; therefore go forth, for ye know not but God may work a great Salvation for you, and if ye will quite your unbelief, and close with Christ in the offer of this great Salvation (by faith) ye shall have no more to do, but eat and drink, and divide the spoil.

V. The fifth bar which withholdeth persons from imbracing of this great Salvation, is the bar of *unwillingness*, *Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life.* And alas, that is an iron bar indeed by which all that are in hell have barred themselves out of Heaven. Alas shall ye be such wretches also: O what a dreadful sound is that, *Wo unto thee, O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be? Ah, turn you, turn you,*

you, why will you die? Why will ye slight this great Salvation? O will none of you this day imbrace it!

VI. The sixth bar that withholdeth persons from imbracing the great Salvation, is the bar of *worldly mindedness*: many of you are so fixed to the world, that ye cannot come and close with this great Salvation. I may allude to that word spoken of *Saul*, 1 Sam. 10. 22. That he *hid himself among the stuff*, for many have buried, and nested themselves in the midst of the world, that they cannot imbrace this great Salvation.

VII. The seventh bar which keepeth many from imbracing this great Salvation, is the bar of *hard-heartedness*; there hath such a stupidity and heardness of heart seized upon many, that let Christ preach as he will to them, (by his Word, or by other dispensations) they are no more moved, than if this Word, or Dispensations were a thousand miles from them. O that strong bar of heardness of heart, when shall the Omnipotent hand of God break it.

VIII. The eighth bar that hindreth many from imbracing this great Salvation, is the bar of *slowness*, many of you cannot be at the pains to imbrace it: But I say unto you, there is but small pains in the way of Godliness: I say unto you, it may so easily be had, that it is in your offer to day: and if ye will, ye may put forth your hand, and take it. Consider therefore what ye will: O will ye despise it, I say, will ye still neglect and despise it? Will ye but read that dreadful Word, Acts 13. 40, 41. *Behold ye despisers, and wonder and perish.* Tell me freely, would ye have us to return this answer to him who sent us, that ye are despisers of this great Salvation? Say to it, Are there none of you, who (for all this) will consent to partake of this great Salvation? O captives and prisoners, and ye who are in the bonds of Satan, will ye come, and partake of this great Salvation, and you shall be made free. I have an act of release for you to day; if ye

will come, and make use of it, ye shall be set at liberty. But, Oh, shall the prison doors be cast open, and yet none come forth? But (that I may come to a close) I say unto you, O poor prisoner go forth, go forth, and partake of this great Salvation. Oh, will ye not come forth? What holdeth you in? The foundation of your prison house is shaken to day, therefore if ye will but come forth, and cast a look to Christ, your very shackles shall fall off your hands, and ye shall be as those who were never bound. Now I leave this with you, and to make you think upon it, I shall speak these five words unto you, and I intreat you think upon them.

1. First, I have excellent tidings to tell you (I hope some of you will give ear to them) viz. There is a great person come here to-day, and that is the mighty Author of this great Salvation, who hath brought everlasting Righteousness with him, desiring you to make use thereof; it is his desire that ye would take his excellent Gift at his hand. These, I say, are the Tidings that I have to preach unto you; and I hope never to be declared a liar; for what I preach unto you, I say yet unto you, that Christ, the Author of this Great Salvation, desireth to give it freely unto you, if ye will but take it. But, O will ye not take it? I think, if ye did see an hundred men lying in prison, or dungeon, without all light, bread or water, and a great Prince coming to them, saying, I desire to see you all to come forth, and partake of this great Liberty which I bring unto you; and every one of them should answer, *I scorn to come forth at this time*; would ye not think them exceeding great Fools? And yet I fear, this act of great folly falls out in many of your hands to day; that when Christ hath given you the keys of your prison doors, and they are opened, ye will not come forth. But I must intreat you yet to come forth and shew your selves; For who knoweth, but we may be commanded to shut your prison doors again,

again, and to seal them with seven Seals, with an unalterable decree from Heaven, never to be recalled? Wherefore, O ye prisoners go forth, go forth, from your prison house.

2. Secondly, I would say this to you, that it is not without much ground that this Salvation (offered to you) is called a Great Salvation. I know a little Paper of two or three Sheets, might contain all the Salvation that ever any man obtained; but the World would not be able to contain all the Books which might be written to the commendation of this Great Salvation; yea (unto any who will imbrace it) I say first, If thou find not this great Salvation above thy Faith, then go thy way when thou art come; But I know thou wilt find it both above thy Faith and Hope. Secondly, If thou find it not above thy desires, when thou art come unto it; then go thy way again; but were thy desires as the sand upon the Sea shore, thou shalt always find more in this Salvation than ever thou could desire. Thirdly, If this Salvation be not above what thou can conceive, then go thy way when thou art come to it; But think of it as thou can, it shall always be above thy thoughts of it. Fourthly, If this Salvation be not above thy opinion of it, then go thy way when thou art come unto it: But I know thou wilt find it far above thy opinion of it. Therefore seeing it is so Great a Salvation, as that all the world could not contain all the Books might be written in the commendation of it; O will ye imbrace it, even to day, while it is in your offer.

3. Thirdly, I would say this unto you, be perswaded, that there is no sin that will more provock the Majesty of God to punish you, than the sin of slighting the Great Salvation, *Bring forth these murderers, saith the Lord (of the slighers of this invitation) and slay them before me.* I intreat you enquire at your own hearts, what will ye answer when ye are reproved for slighting of it? Old men, will ye ask at your own hearts,

what will ye answer to Christ when he shall propose that question to you, Why slighted ye the great Salvation? Old women, what will ye answer, when he shall say to you, Why slighted ye the great Salvation? Young men, and young women, inquire at your own hearts what ye will answer, when Christ shall say to you, Why slighted ye the great Salvation? Can ye imagine any answer unto that question? O dreadful shall the wrath of God be, that shall be executed upon the slighers of this great Salvation?

4. Fourthly, I would say this unto you, that Heaven is waiting to hear, what acceptation the offer of this great Salvation doth get among you, here is the great Salvation, here is the offer of it, and here is the commendation of it: What say you to it? is it not an excellent Salvation? is it not a free Salvation? is it not a great Salvation, is it not an eternal Salvation? Why then do ye not welcome it? can any of you say any thing to the discommendation of it: I know you cannot? Yes, I dare say, your own hearts are admiring it as most excellent; And therefore, O will ye accept it. Alas, shall there be none here who will be found Accepters of this great Salvation, so freely offered to day?

5. Fifthly, I would say this to you, let all the Angels praise him who is the Author of this great Salvation, All the Saints round about the Throne, praise him who is the Author of this great Salvation. All these who are Expectants of Heaven, praise him who is the Author of this great Salvation. All ye to whom this offer is made, praise him who is the Author of this great Salvation. O Heaven praise him, who is the Author of this great Salvation. O all ye fowls of the Air, praise him who is the Author of this great Salvation. O fire, hail, snow, vapours, stormy winds and tempests, praise him who is the Author of this great Salvation. All the Tribes of the Earth, praise him who is the Author of this great Salvation. Our own
Soul

Soul praise him who is the Author of this great Salvation, and all that is within us bless him, who is the Author of this great Salvation: O who would not praise him, who is the Author of this great Salvation? Are there any here that will refuse to commend him? O think upon him, and let not this be a day of slighting him? Now where are your hearts at this time? I will tell you where many of your hearts are, they are thinking upon the World: but I am sure there are not many of them thinking upon this great Salvation. Now what resolution mind ye to go away with to day? Oh, have ye no resolution beyond what ye had when ye came hither to day? Are there any here who have this resolution, *To whom shall we go, but to him who is the Author of this Great Salvation, who alone hath the words of eternal life?* Even the Lord breath it upon you. Or is this your resolution, that through Christ's strength (*for sake him who will*) ye will never forsake him? Or, have ye this resolution, *That ye will esteem more highly of the Great Salvation than ever ye did?* O that the Lord may keep these in the imaginations of the thoughts of your heart for ever, but as for you who have no resolutions to imbrace this great Salvation: O wherewith shall I commend it unto you? Do not your own necessities commend it? But if nothing can perswade you to come away and imbrace it, then this place shall be a heap of witnesses against you: *for it hath heard all the words of the Law, which he hath spoken unto you,* Josh. 24.

Oh, cast your eyes upon these Pillars of the House, and stones of the Walls, I take them as so many Witnesses, that they may speak, and testify against you in the great day of the Lord, if ye neglect this great Salvation to day. Therefore ere ye go away, be thinking upon it, whether or not ye mind to imbrace it? now while ye may have it. This day I have set Life and Death before you: I have set before you both the great Salvation, and the great Damnation;

and O that ye had understanding in all these things that ye being wise, might be provoked at last to imbrace this great Salvation, the which we do yet again intreat you to think upon. Is not Heaven looking upon you at this time, to see what ye will do with this great offer of Salvation, which I have this day (from the Lord) presented unto you? Now, to him, that can perswade you to imbrace this great Salvation, this Gospel Redemption, this blessed Mystery into which the Angels desire to pry, to him, *Who can bring you back from the pit: and enlighten you with the light of the living*; To him who hath the keys of your prison, *Who can open and none can shut, and can shut and none can open*; To him, *Who hath all power in Heaven and Earth, communicat to Him, who can deliver you from the Grave, and can set you free from all your Enemies*, We desire to give praise. Amen.

S E R M O N II.

Heb. 2. 3. How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation, which as the first began so be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.

THere are two Great and most ordinary Complaints in these days; 1. There are many who complain, that their Estates and Persons are in bondage, and that they are sold for slaves to the hand of strangers; But, O that we could also turn over the Complaint to this, that our Souls are in bondage, and that we are yet in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, that so we might be provoked to long for the Great Salvation that is in your offer. 2. There are many complaining (and not without much cause) that there is now such a toleration of Errours: But, O wilt thou complain also of this, that within thy heart there is a toleration of lusts: is there not an

an act of toleration concluded within thy breast, that the Devil and his company may reign in thee at pleasure: Oh, have ye not need of this Great Salvation? Shall I tell you, that Christ is courting you to imbrace it, that he putteth on all his most glorious Robes, and manifesteth himself unto you, as a Suiter making offer of himself, and of his Great Salvation. O tell me, have ye seen him? or do ye think to see him this day? What Robes had he on? There are five glorious Robes wherewith he cloaths himself, when he condescendeth to manifest himself to his People. *First*, He cometh to his own with the garments of Salvation, according to that word, *Zech. 9. ver. 9* Rejoyce O daughter of Sion greatly, shout O daughter of Jerusalem, for behold, thy King cometh unto thee, he is just, and having Salvation; nay, your King is come here to day, and will you not fall in love with him when he is cloathed with the Garments of Salvation: Can ye ever have a more conquering sight of Christ, than when he is cloathed with such an excellent Robe, and offering you Salvation. *Secondly*, He appeareth to his own sometimes in a garment dyed with blood, according to that word, *Isa. 6. ver. 1, 23*. *Who is this that cometh up from Edom, with dyed garments in blood, as one that treadeth the Wine fat?* And now I say to thee that will not look to Christ when he appears in the garments of Salvation, have ye a heart to refuse him, that hath fought such a combat for you, who hath trode the Wine press alone, and hath stained all his garments with the blood of his Enemies; or is there any here who dare refuse this Salvation, when they see how he treads his enemies in anger, and trampleth them in his fury, and thus sprinkles their blood upon his garments. O tremble at this sight, and seek Quarters from him in time, or he shall dy his garments with the blood of thy immortal Soul. *Thirdly*, Christ appeareth unto his own, being clothed with these humble Robes of condescendency, when he came in the similitude of sinful flesh. O what a sight was that

to behold the Prince of Heaven clothed with our nature? What a sight was that to behold him, that was clothed with light, as with a garment, to be clothed with our infirmities? yet he condescended to clothe himself thus, that we might have access unto him, and be partakers of his Gifts: O can we refuse Him, when he hath thus pressed him to put on begger weed, that he might say to worms, ye are my brethren, and my sisters. Fourthly, Christ sometimes manifesteth himself, being clothed with the garments of beauty, and ravishing Majesty, such was the sight that the Spouse got of Christ, Cant. 2. 8. *As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons; And Song 5. When she saw him, white and ruddy; and the standard bearer of Ten thousand*, such was that joyful sight of him, when his garments were as the Light, and white as the snow, which he had at the Transfiguration, when these glorified ones did come (as it were) Ambassadors from that higher House to make him a visit. And fifthly, Christ he sometimes appeareth to his own, in Robes of dreadful Majesty, and terrible highness and loftiness, when the Soul upon the first sight of him remains dead, and there remains no more life in them; such was the sight that Daniel got, in his 10 Chapter, and such was the sight that John got of Christ, Rev. 1. 17. And I would ask at all that are here, what a sight have ye gotten of Christ to day, in which of all these Robes have ye seen Him in: It is true, we are not now to look for the extraordinary sights of Him; But yet if ever thou hast seen Him in any of his wooing Robes, sure he hath appeared matchless, and how shall ye then refuse Him?

But now to come to the words, I was speaking unto you of; The first thing in the words, to wit, That there are in any who live under the offer of this Great Salvation, that do slight it, and do not embrace it; and now I shall only add a few things further unto you. 1. Let me propose a few Considerations to perswade you
to

to imbrace this great Salvation; God forbid we go away before we imbrace this Gospel Salvation: And therefore I charge you in his Name, go not away before ye imbrace it. And to press it home upon you, there are these eight or nine properties of this Great Salvation, that is offered unto you this day.

And first, It is a *free salvation*, ye have no more a do, but to put forth your hand and take it: O come and take it: Christ hath fought for this salvation, and there is no more required of you but to come, and reap the fruits of his Victory; *Who ever will, let him come*, there is nothing that should move you to stay away, O captives, bond slaves to Satan, O prisoners of hope, will ye come and partake of the Great Salvation, what holds you from coming away and partaking of it? It is freely offered unto you, ay, believe it, Christ requires no more of you, but that ye should come and take it out of his hand; *If ye consent to obey, the bargain is ended; Ye shall eat the good of the land, Isa. 1.*

Secondly, This Great Salvation is a compleat Salvation, that is offered unto you to day, this is clear, *Luke 1. ver. 71. That we might be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us*, there is not any enemy that is in thy way, but if thou wilt come and partake of the great Salvation, thou may have victory over it, so compleat a Salvation it is that is in your offer this day; O shall we pass away and not imbrace it: O shall your cursed hearts undervalue this compleat Salvation that is come to your door? believe it, *Salvation is near unto you*, if ye will take it.

Thirdly, It is a *wonderful Salvation*, it is such a Salvation as the Angels desire to pry into it, and it is such a Salvation, that all the Prophets desire to pry into it; it is almost six thousand years since all the Angels in Heaven fell into a Sea of wonder at this Great Salvation; It is almost six thousand years since *Abel* fell into a Sea of wonder at this great Salvation: And

And what think ye is his exercise this day? He is even wondring at this great Salvation; Would ye ask at all the Angels in Heaven, would they not all say, O imbrace the great Salvation; Would ye ask at all the Saints that are above, would they not advise you to imbrace that Great Salvation; Would ye ask at *Adam*, would he not say, *O imbrace this Great Salvation*; Would ye ask at *Abel*, would he not say, *O imbrace this Great Salvation*; And would not all the Patriarchs say unto you, *O imbrace this Great Salvation*; And do not all that have tasted of the sweetness of it, cry out unto you, *Come and imbrace the Great Salvation*.

The fourth property of this Salvation is, that it was bought at an exceeding dear rate, it is a dear Salvation. Would ye know the difference between Christs coming to this Salvation, and your coming to it, it is this, Christ was forced to travel through all the armies of the Justice of God: he was forced to drink of the cup of the wrath of God, before he could come to purchase this great Salvation; And now what is required of you to obtain this, we may say no more but put out your hands and take it; will ye look to the price that was laid down for this Salvation, there is not a wound in the Body of Christ, but it saith *This is a dear Salvation*; There is not a reproach Christ met with, but it saith, *O is not this a dear Salvation*? There is not a buffeting Christ met with, but it saith *O is not this a dear Salvation*? There is not a necessity that he is put into, but it saith, *Is not this a great and dear Salvation*? O Sirs, will ye not come and take this great Salvation, this dear Salvation, What must I give for it say ye? I say, ye must give nothing for it, come and take it, *without Money and without price* it was dear to Christ, but it shall be cheap unto you O! is it not cheap to you? I assure you, if you will come to the Mercat to buy the great Salvation, there is none of you that needeth to stand for the price of it

O come and take it, and have it, and there shall be no more priggging.

Fifthly, It is an everlasting Salvation, that ye shall enjoy the Fruits of throughout eternity, as is clear, *Heb. 9. 13. He became the Author of eternal Redemption unto us.* It is a Salvation that the Devil can never be able to take out of your Hand, if ye take it, ye shall never be robbed of it again. O come and partake of this great Salvation whereby the gates of hell shall never prevail against you.

Sixthly, It is a noble and honourable Salvation, it is not to be taken out of one slavery to another, but it is to be taken out of Prison that we may reign, *Luk. 1. v. 71. compared with v. 74. It is, That we being loved, may serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness all the days of our Life.* I say, Come, come, and partake of this great Salvation, that your Glory may be increased and that ye may be exalted above the Kings of the Earth.

Seventhly, It is a most advantageous Salvation: What are the advantages of any salvation, that are not to be found in this? Is there no peace to be found through this Salvation? Is there not liberty to be found through this Salvation? Is there not eternal enjoyment of God to be found through this Salvation? yea all salvations are in this one Salvation.

Lastly, It is a Royal Salvation, for it cometh to us from, and through the Son of God: Christ is the Author of it, and we conceive, Christ may be said to be the Author of this salvation, in these respects, 1. He is the meritorious cause that did procure it, it was the price of his blood that was laid down for it to purchase this Great Salvation. 2. He is the fountain from whence it floweth; according to that which we have cited, *Heb. 5. 9. He became the Author of eternal salvation.* 3. He is the person that fitteth our Spirits for partaking of it, and it is he that removeth mountains

tains out of the way, that we may have fair access unto the Great Salvation. 4. It is he that must perswade our Hearts to imbrace and take hold of it. He standeth without and cryeth in to the Heart to imbrace this Great Salvation; And he standeth within making the Heart cry out *content*, I will imbrace the Great Salvation; He is indeed the person that commendeth, and doth point forth this Great Salvation unto us. He is the noble Minister of it, it began first to be preached by Him.

Now, Is there any of you that hath fallen in love with this Great Salvation; that ye may try yourselves. I shall give you some evidences of the persons that are near unto this Great Salvation. Is thy estimation of the Great Salvation increased by what it was in the morning when thou camest hither? Is thy estimation of the great Gospel Salvation a foot higher than it was in the morning; I say unto thee, thou art not far from the Great Salvation. Come away. 2. Is thy desire after the Great Salvation increased by what it was in the morning? Hast thou stronger desires after the Great Salvation than before thou camest hither that is an evidence thou art not far from it. 3. *Is thy thoughts of thy necessity* of the Great Salvation greater than they were? Thinkest thou that thou hast more need of the Great Salvation than ever thou thoughtest before? And is thy opinion and thoughts of saving thyself, less than they were before thou camest hither? Art thou forced to cry out, *none but Christ can save me*? I say thou art not far from the Great Salvation; Wilt thou come away. O that ye would once seal this conclusion with much Heart perswasion, *I am undone without Christ, I am undone without Christ*, who is the Author of this Great Salvation. Are there any of you that are sensible that ye are in the fetters of sin, and in the bonds of iniquity? Are ye brought to the conviction of this, that ye are in the gall of bitterness? I say, if thou be brought to this length, to be sensible of

of thy bonds and are crying out, O Redeemer, hasten and come away; I say, If thou be sensible of thy bonds and imprisonment, and crying out, O thou that wast appointed from eternity, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. O hasten and come away and redeem me, even poor me, sinking, sinning, perishing, self-destroying me, thou art not far from the Great Salvation. 4. Art thou a person who beginneth to weep, because thou hast been so long a stranger to Christ, and the Great Salvation; Old men that are here, how long have ye been strangers to the Great Salvation, and to the Author of it? Now will ye shed one tear for your estrangements, and cry out, Wo is me that Christ and I have been so long asunder; I say if thou hast come that length, thou art not far from the Great Salvation, *come away*; O pity your selves, make haste, make haste, and *come away*.

But now in the third place, let me give you some evidences by which ye may know more clearly, whether or no ye have imbraced *this Great Salvation*, that ye may know your selves, and that ye walk not down to your Grave with a lie in your right hand. The first evidence of a person that hath imbraced the Great Salvation, is, that they will have a high esteem of the Saviour and Author of the Great Salvation; Hast thou a matchless esteem of matchless Christ, the the Saviour of the World? that is a speaking evidence unto thee, thou art a partaker of the Great Salvation; Art thou come this length, that thou cryest out, *none but Christ, none but Christ*, it is a speaking evidence, that thou art come to be a partaker of the Great Salvation, when thou can cry out that Word, *Exod. 15. The Lord is my strength and my song, He alone is become my salvation*; If Christ hath become thy salvation, then it is like he hath become thy song. I would ask this at you, were ye ever brought this length, that you durst never adventure to praise Christ your alone, but was forced

forced to call all the creatures and say, *O magnifie the Lord with me?* O that is an evidence, that ye have imbraced this Salvation.

Secondly, These who have imbraced the great Salvation, will study to maintain and keep their grips of it; they will study to hold fast so precious a Jewel, this is prest, *Gal. 5. 1. Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.* Yea, they will study to walk suitable to this noble mercy, at least, they will strive and endeavour to do it, as is also pressed, in that same verse, I say. if thou hast been made a partaker of the Gospel of Salvation, thou wilt strive to keep thy self from the power of these things that once triumphed over thee.

Thirdly, A person that is a partaker of the great Salvation, will have a high esteem of this mercy and Salvation; So *Paul*, when he speaketh of it here, he cannot but put some note of excellency to it, calling it the *Great Salvation*; Therefore I say, if thou hast imbraced the great Salvation, thou wilt have so high esteem of it, that not to be subjected to it as thou should, or to be in subjection to the power of thy lust in any measure, will be his burden and affliction. The man will be sorry when he is brought forth from the house of bondage, unto the red Sea; he will be sorry, that when he should have songs of triumph over his idols put in his mouth, that they should sing songs of triumph over him.

Fourthly, A person that hath imbraced the great Salvation, he will be longing sometimes for the day when his Salvation shall be compleat, when he shall sing that song, with that *numerous multitude, which cannot be numbred*, *Rev. 7. 9.* O what a day shall it be when thou shalt begin to sing that song. After this (saith he) *I beheld, and lo, a great multitude of all people which no man could number, of all People, nations and languages, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands, and they cried*

ayed: and how cryed they? They cryed with a loud voice. They would not mutter the song, nor sing silently, but cryed with a loud voice, and what did they cry? They cryed with a loud voice, Salvation unto our God, who sitteth upon the Throne, and is the Lamb. I

would only ask you that are partakers of the great Salvation, what songs shall be put into thy mouth, when the Waters of Jordan shall divide themselves, that the ransomed of the Lord must pass thorow? when thou shalt sing that Song, *Psalm 115.* Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thee belongs the glory of our salvation: O what a day shall that be, when that excellent song shall be put in thy mouth? Yea, What a day shall it be, when thou shalt be clothed with these excellent garments, that are made mention of *Isai. 6. verse 10.* For he hath clothed thee with the Garments of Salvation, and he hath covered thee with the Robes of Righteousness: O what robes are these? Did ye ever see such excellent robes as these must be? I think we will misken our selves. O do ye not think we will misken our selves, when we shall put on these excellent Robes? Now therefore is the bargain closed: Or will ye go away before ye take this great Salvation? Dare ye go out at these doors, and neglect the great Salvation? I would ask this at you, Think ye it will not be most sad, that Christ should tell this in Heaven of you to Night, I was preaching to a pack of stones, that none of them would love me: Will ye not be feared that this report shall be carried back to Heaven of you? For what report can Christ carry back but this? Now is the cord of this great Salvation let down unto you, is there none of you that will take a grip of it? O will ye flinger after it! will ye make this a rejoycing day in Heaven, that is a fasting day unto you, and the way to make it so, is to imbrace the great Salvation. Now what say ye to it old men, let me speak to you, and ask

ask your thoughts of the Great Salvation, gray hairs should be a Crown of Glory, if they be found in the way of righteousness, old men speak your minds, that young men may not have your bad example, what say ye of this Salvation? Is it not a most glorious Salvation? Is it not a most excellent Salvation that is in your offer? I intreat you speak your minds, tell Christ ye are content to take the Great Salvation; otherwise, whoever he be that will not partake of this Gospel Salvation, I, in the Name and Authority of Christ our Master, denounce eternal and irrevocable war against him, put on your harness, ye shall not boast when ye put it off again, the wrath and fury of God shall come upon thee to the uttermost, if ye imbrace not this Great Salvation. Other wars are but for a time; the greatest Captains that ever the earth did carry, are now laid down in the sides of the pit, and their swords broken under their hands. Armies of ten hundred thousand, a hundred years time have laid them all in their Graves, and ended all their contests, but there is no discharge of this war, that shall be concluded betwixt Christ and you, it shall become an eternal and most terrible war, which shall be but beginning when time is ended; Now Peace or War, which of them will ye choise? Dare ye send a charge to Christ, and say that ye will defy Him? I am afraid there shall be two things that many of us shall report to day: First I am afraid there will be many that will give *Pharaohs* reports to the offer of the Great Salvation, and say, *Who is the Lord that I should obey him?* I tell you who he is, He is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. O imbrace Him before he go hence, and give not *Pharaohs* report, lest ye be drowned in the sea of his wrath, whence there shall be no recovery. Secondly, I fear there will be many here to day, that will give *Demas* report to this to this precious offer; I will go and forsake Christ, and imbrace this present World; O bad exchange, cursed

asked be he that shall make it, will ye be of Demas
 humour? I fear there hath been many of that
 humour of a long time; but I intreat you once to
 be wise before you die. I confess that Proverb, old
 fools are twice fools; I think old men that will not
 embrace this Great Salvation, I think they are triple
 fools; what wait ye for, is there any thing can afford
 you any satisfaction but this Great Salvation? Now
 are ye convinced old men, that Christ is waiting for
 your answer: I intreat you before ye go hence, I speak
 your minds, what ye think of the Great Salvation?
 is it not a lovely Salvation? is it not lovely now?
 What say ye to it? I am to go away, and the offer
 is to be taken up at this time, and it is hard to say, if
 ever ye shall have an offer again. I would only say this
 to you, and be sure of it, though I should never be
 a partaker of this Great Salvation, yet I shall be a
 witness against you that are not partakers of it: I
 tell and declare unto you, I shall be a witness against
 you, if ye imbrace not this Great Salvation. Now
 old men are ye perswaded to imbrace it? Let me ob-
 test you *by the beauty of Christ*, come and partake of the
 Great Salvation, ye that are travelling upon the bor-
 ders of eternicy. Now if ye will give no more, give
 this, will ye go home and think upon it, I shall not
 be uncharitable, nor enter to judge your thoughts:
 I fear there will be many declared and found guilty
 among us, that we have declared unto Heaven we
 will not imbrace the Great Salvation, but have tread
 the blood of the *Son of God under foot*. Now I intreat
 you, every one of you, ask at your selves if ye be
 the persons that will *presume in your Heart to do so*. Now
 I shall leave it with you, let it not be a witness against
 you: I shall leave it with this: O come away, old
 men, young men, old women, and maids, come and
 imbrace this precious Gospel Salvation. Ye may say,
 ye bid us come, but we cannot come. I desire no
 more of you but to come with this, Lord I am con-
 tent

tent to come, but I cannot come. Come once to that for if once ye be content to receive it, it will not be long before ye be able to receive it. Now shall Christ depart, and will none of you say, ye are content to take him? Will ye charge your own Consciences with this: Am I content to take Christ and the Great Salvation? O blest, blest, blest be he that is the Author of this Great Salvation: and blest be he that gets any of the ends of the cords of the Great Salvation, that he sink not under the wrath and fury of the Lord. Come and imbrace this Great Salvation: and again I say, come and imbrace it; for what can ye have if ye want it? and what can ye want if ye have it? I shall say no more but close with that word, *Isai. 61. 2. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed to the ends of the World, to those that are far off? what hath he proclaimed? Say ye to the daughter of Zion, behold thy Salvation cometh, behold it cometh; I say unto you that are the ends of the World, Salvation is brought near unto you: stout Hearted and far from Righteousness, the Great Salvation is brought near unto you, and will ye send it away? O consider what ye are doing: And to Him that can perswade you to imbrace this Great Salvation, we desire to give Praise,*

A SERMON Concerning DEATH.

Psal. 89. 48. What Man is he that liveth and shall not see death, &c.

IT is very hard to determine. where all that are here shall be within thirty years; for even ere that time come, many (if not all) of us who are here shall have taken up our everlasting lodging. And whether we shall take it up in the eternity of Joy, or in the eternity of Pain, is also hard to determine, only this one thing I am sure of, that all of us shall shortly

be gone; And ere long the shadows of death shall be sitting upon our eye-lids, and our eye-strings shall begin to break. Therefore I would the more seriously inquire at you, what would you think if Death were approaching his night unto you? Think ye that Jesus Christ is gone up to prepare a place for you? even for you? surely I think we are all near to eternity, and there are some hearing me to day, whom I defy the whole world to assure, that ever they shall hear another Sermon; Therefore I intreat you all to hear this preaching, as if it were the last Preaching, that ever ye should hear, and O that we could speak it, as if it were the last Sermon that ever we would preach unto you. Believe me, death is another thing than we take it to be? Ob. what will many of us do in the day of our visitation, when desolation shall come from afar? where will we flee for rest; and where will we leave our glory? Old rich men, where will ye flee when death assaults you? Old poor men, where will ye flee when death assaults you? Old women, where will ye flee when death assaults you; Young women, where will ye flee when death assaults you? it was an ancient observation of David Psal. 39. 5. That God had made his days as an hand-breadth; this either may relate to the four-fold estate of man, viz. his infancy, his childhood, his manhood, and his old age. Or it may relate to the four-fold time of his Life, viz. his morning, his forenoon, his afternoon, and his evening, yet all our lifetime is but a day. And O think ye not that our day is near unto a close.

Now before that I begin to speak any thing from the words, I shall speak a few things to these two questions, which I conceive, may not altogether be unprofitable.

Quest. 1. Whether is it lawful for any to desire to die, and to return unto their long and endless home; whether it be lawful for one to cry out, O

time, time flee away (and all my shadow, let them be gone)
that so long eternity may come ?

Ans^r I say it is lawful in some cases for one to desire to die: for it was Pauls desire, Phil. 1. 23. *I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.* And 2 Cor. 5. 2. *We groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed with our house which is from Heaven.* I long greatly till the twentieth one year of my age come, when my minority shall be overpast, that I may be entered heir to that matchless inheritance. But to clear in what cases it is lawful to desire to die.

1. I say, it is lawful to desire to die, when it floweth from a desire of uninterrupted fellowship and communion with Christ and conjunction with him, this is clear, 1 Cor. 5. 6. *Knowing that while we are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord.* Therefore, ver. 8. *We are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.* Also it is clear Philip. 1. 23. *I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ which is far better.* It was his great end to have near and unmixed communion with Christ. What aileth you Paul (might one have said) may ye not be content to stay a while here? Nay saith Paul *I desire to be gone, and to be with Christ.* Wast thou never with him here, Paul? I have been with him, saith he but what is all my being with him here, in comparison of my being with him above, *While I am present in the body, I am absent from the Lord;* Therefore I will never be at rest, saith he, get what I will, until I get Christ, until I get those naked and immediat embracements of that noble Plant of Renown, the Flower of the stock of Jesse, who is the light of the higher house, the eternal admiration of Angels.

2. It is lawful to desire to die when it floweth from the excellencies of Heaven, from a desire to partake of those excellent things that are there, this is clear, 2 Cor. 5. 4. *We groan, being burdened;* or as the word is

groan as they who are pressed under a heavy burden, that may be cloathed upon, &c. What aileth you to groan O Paul? O saith he, I groan that mortality may be swallowed up of Life.

3. It is lawful to desire to die, when it floweth from desire to be freed from the body of death; and from these tentations that do assault us; and from these oppressions whereunto we are subject by it. Doubtless, Paul desired to die on this account, when he cryed out, Rom. 7. 24. *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!* He longeth greatly for that day, *Wherein he should be made white like the wings of a Dove, covered with silver, whose feathers are of yellow gold.* O saith Paul, I am as one impatient till I be above, where I shall be cloathed with these excellent and cleanly Robes, *The righteousness of Christ.* Oh, saith Paul, I think every day a year, till I be possessed of that kingdom where satan cannot tempt, and the creature cannot yield, and where I shall be free from all my fears of sinning. Now in all these respects, who would not desire to die? But to guard all these, I would give you these four Cautions;

1. *Caut.* Your desire to die should not be peremptory, but ye should desire to die with submission to the will of God, so that although he would fill up fifteen years more to your life, ye should be content to live it out.

2. *Caut.* When your desires are hasty, and off hand, suspect them; for some when they meet with an outward cross (without all deliberation) will cry out, *O to be gone, O that I were dead.* But your desire to die should be deliberat, but not hastily or rash.

3. *Caut.* It is not lawful to desire to die, because of personal afflictions. Many, when they meet with bitter afflictions, will cry out, *O to be gone;* They long for death even upon that account, such were *Jobs* desires, Job 21. 32, and Chap. 6. ver. 8, 9. *O that I might have my request, even that it would please God to destroy me.* This desire was very unlawful.

G

4. *Caut.*

4. *Caus* It is not lawful to desire to die, when thy predominant Idol is taken away from thee, yet such was *Jonahs* desire, Chap 4. 23. *Jonah* thought his credit and reputation (which was his idol) was gone, and could never be regained; therefore he wished to die. But I would say this to you, that some will have ten desires for death, when they have not one desire for heaven. And what moveth Christians to be so desirous to die? It is not so much because of their hope as because of their anxiety; it is not so much because of their confidence, as because of their impatience. But I say unto you, when your desires of death are not accompanied with desires of heaven, suspect them.

2. I would say this, that there are some who will have ten desires for death, when they will not have one for the death of the body of death; but it were good for thee (who are such) to be desiring the death of the body of death, then should thou be in a more suitable frame to desire to die.

3. Some will have hearty desires to die, and yet when death cometh, they will be as unwilling to die as any, it hath been observed, that some who have much desire to die, when death came, have cryed out, *O spare a little, that I may recover strength, &c.*

4. There is a great difference between a desire to die, and death it self. It is an easie thing to desire to die, but it is a very great business to meet with death, and to look it in the face when it cometh. We think death (ere it come near us) to be but Childrens play, but when we meet with it, it maketh us change our thoughts, for it is a great business to die?

Quest: 2: Is it lawful for a Christian to desire to live, when he is summoned to die;

Ans. In some cases it is lawful for a Christian to desire to live, even when he is summoned to die; which is clear from the practice of *David*, *Psal: 39: 13.* where he prayeth, *That the Lord will spare him a little.* It is also clear from the practice of good *Hezekiah*, *Isai*

3: when he was commanded to set his house in order, he should die, and not live, he cryed forth, Remember O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart: and have done that which is good in thy sight, and Hezekiah wept sore, Or as the word in the original, He wept with great weeping: but to guard this, take these two Cautions.

Caution. 1. Thy desires to live (when thou art summoned to die) should not be peremptory, but with submission to the will of God, that if it be his pleasure to remove thee presently out of time, thou should be content to die.

Caution. 2. Thy desires to live should have gracious principles, and also a very gracious end, as is most clear from David, Psal: 39: 13: where he saith, O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength, before I go from hence and be no more: his desire to live was, that he might have victory over his idols, as if he had said, my desire to live is, that I may have strength to wrestle with, and overcome my idols: and without all controversie Hezekiah's desire was a most precious and well grounded desire: However I would say this unto thee, that thou shouldest examine thy desires to live as much, (if not more) as thy desires to die; for we are ready to shun death if we could, but he is that universal King, unto whom all of us must be subject ere long.

Now in the words which are read unto you, there are these six things, which may be clearly observed from them.

I. First, That it is a most clear and infallible Truth, that all persons shall once see death, as is clear in these words, *Who is he that liveth, and shall not see death?*

II. Secondly, that this Truth (that we shall once see death) is not much believed or thought upon by many, therefore it is that the Psalmist doubleth the Assertion, *Who is he that liveth, and shall not see death?*

shall

shall he deliver his soul (that is his life) from the hand
(that is) from the power of the grave.

III. Thirdly, That sometimes a Christian may
win to the solid Faith of this Truth, that once he
must die, this the Psalmist wan unto, as it is also clear
in that word (who) *Who is he that liveth, and shall*
not see death.

IV. Fourthly, That the certainty of this, that once
we shall die, should be still kept in our mind, there-
fore that note of attention, *Selah*, is put to it, as if
he had said, take heed, that there is none living that
shall not die.

V. Fifthly, That howbeit some persons put the evil
day far away, as if they were not to see death, yet
is the day coming when they shall see death, and
death shall take them by the hand.

VI. Sixthly, We shall take notice of this from the
Context, that the Christian who is much in minding
the brevity of his life, will believe the certainty of
his death: the Psalmist was speaking of the shortness
of his life, in the preceeding verse, and in this verse
he speaketh of the certainty of death.

Now as for the first of these things observed, viz.
That it is certain and most sure, that we must all once
die: I hope there are none of you here who will
deny, although I confess some few of you believe, that
yet said the woman of Tekoh, 2 Sam. 14. 14. *We*
must all die, and be like water spilt upon the
ground, that cannot be gathered up again: God
doth not accept the person of any. And Job 36. 23
I know thou wilt bring me to death, and to the
house appointed for all living. And it is very clear
Eccles. 8. 8. There is no man that hath power
over the spirit to retain the spirit, neither hath
any power in the day of death, and there is no dis-
charge in that war, neither shall wickedness deliver
those that are given to it. It is clear, Heb. 9. 27 It
is appointed unto all men once to die. So that

most clear that we must die. I remember of one Philip, King of Macedonia, who had one substitute for his very end, to cry at his Chamber door every morning, *Memento mori, memento mori, memento mori*; remember thou art to die. And it is reported to have been the practice of the Nobles of Greece, and in the day wherein their Emperour was crowned, that they presented a *Marble-stone* unto him, and he was inquired after what fashion he would have his Tomb-stone made? Which practice speaks forth this unto us, that although these were most destitute of the light of the Scriptures, they were very mindful of death. Believe me, Death may surprise us before we be aware: for it is most certain that we must die; but there is nothing more uncertain than the way how and the time when we shall die.

Death will surprise some, as it did *Abel* in the open fields, *Gen. 4. 8.* Death will surprise some, as it did *Eglon* in his Parlour, *Judges 3. 21.* And death will surprise some, as it did *Saul* and *Jonathan*, in the flight, *1 Sam. 31.*

Now in speaking to this point, I shall first speak a little to these advantages which attend those that live within continual sight of Death. Secondly, I shall give you some Considerations to press you to prepare for Death. Thirdly, I shall give you some Directions to help you to prepare for Death: And then we shall proceed unto the second point of Doctrine, which we observed from the Text, and I shall speak a few things from it unto you, and so come to a close for this time.

First then, we conceive there are these seven advantages which attend those who live within the continual sight of this truth, that they must die.

I. First, The Faith of approaching death will make a soul exceeding diligent in duty: this was our blessed Lords Divinity, *John. 9. 4.* *I must work the work of him that sent me, while it is day the night cometh*

why we must ~~and~~ work; That is death is approaching therefore I must work. It is clear also, 2 *Pet.* 1. 12. compared with ver. 14. In the 12. ver. *Peter* is exceeding diligent in his duty, and the ground of his diligence is in the 14. ver. *Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, &c.* Yet it is even the *Epicures* argument, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die?* and should not the Christian much more cry out, *Let me watch and pray, for to morrow I may die?* I say, If the *Epicures* did make use of this notion, to make them vigorous in the pursuit of their pleasures: O how much more should a Christian improve it, for making him vigorous in the pursuit of his duty? Therefore I say unto you all O be ye diligent, for your night is drawing near. O Christians, and expectants of Heaven, are ye not afraid lest ye be nighted before ye have walked the half of your journey? For if ye be nighted on your journey to Heaven, before ye come to the end of your race, there is no retising place whereunto ye may turn aside to lodge: therefore O *work, work, work, while it is to day*, for behold death is approaching, and then shall we all be called to an account.

II. The Faith of approaching death, will make a Christian exceeding active in duty, he will not only be diligent, but also exceeding serious, and zealous in the exercise of his duty: This is clear from that notable exhortation, [*Ecc.* 9: 10: *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: and the reason is, For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.*] Wherefore, O be active while ye are alive, for ye shall never work any more after ye are dead; and if ye leave but one work undone, there is no doing of it after death. There is no work (saith *Solomon*) in the grave; therefore, O be active.

III. The Faith of this truth, that we must all die, will help a Christian to be exceeding mortified to the things

things of a Present world: Oh, covetous men and women, would ye shake hands with cold death but once every morning, I should defy you to pursue the world so much as ye do: *Paul* was much in the meditation of his change, which made him, *2 Cor: 1: 18:* to overlook these things that are temporary, 'while we look not, (saith he) to the things that are seen, which are temporal, but to the things which are not seen, which are eternal, therefore, Chap: 5: 1: Knowing, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have an building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens: Therefore in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.' What aileth you *Paul* (might one have said) may ye not take a look of the World? no saith he; [For I know that if this earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, I have a house with God, not made with hands, but eternal in the Heavens.] That is, I know that ere long the pins of my tabernacle will be loosed, and it will fall down about my ears, therefore I must look for another dwelling-house: And, [1 Cor: 7: 24: The fashion of this world passeth away. Therefore *saith he*, ver: 32: I would have you without carefulness, caring how to please the Lord. And *Phil: 4: 5:* Let your moderation be known to all men the Lord is at hand.] As if he had said, Death is approaching and at hand, therefore I intreat you be sober: But I think many of us will be found like *Saul*, hid among the stuff, that is, we will be lying amongst the midst of the pleasures of this passing world, But I say unto thee who are such an one, that death will break the strings of thy harp, thy musick will quickly cease. O but death will make thee have a low esteem of the world. O blessed is the person who hath these thoughts of the world all along his way, which he shall have of it at death! have not the most cursed wretches been forced to cry forth, Oh,

I would give ten thousand worlds for Christ? have not some persons (who have had the Moon upon their head, and that have made their belly their god) been forced to cry forth at death, O cursed person that I am, that ever I made the world my god? Alas that I contented my self with the world. Therefore I say unto thee who art such an one, O stay thy pursuit after the world, for death is approaching that will cause all thy worldly comforts vanish.

IV. When a Christian believeth this truth, that he must die, it will be an exceeding great restraint to keep him from sinning, as is clear, Job 31. 13. compared with v. 14. where Job reckoning over many good deeds done by himself, saith, *What then shall I do when God riseth up, and when he visiteth, what shall I answer Him?* As if he had said, Sirs, mistake me not, I am not boasting much of my self, for I could not have done otherwise, else what should I do when God riseth up? how could I answer to God if I had done otherwise? I think it were a notable practice of each of you, to say, *O temptation; what will I answer to God, when he riseth up, to reprove me, if I should yield unto thee?* Likewise Ecclesi. 11. 9. where Solomon dissuading young men to pursue after their vanity, bringeth this as a reason, *Know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee to judgment;* Therefore I say unto thee, who are often tempted to sin, let death and reckoning with God be still in thy sight, and I defy thee then to embrace half so many temptations as now thou doest. I intreat you to answer all your temptations with that word, *What shall I do when he riseth up? And what shall I answer when he visiteth me?*

V. When a Christian liveth within the sight of the Truth, that he shall once see death, it will make him exceeding patient under every cross wherewith he meeteth. Such a Christian will hardly meet with a cross but he will quiet himself with this, Death will put me beyond this cross, this is but a cloud that will quickly

pass away. And for this cause did David so composedly put up that desire, *Psal. 39. 4. Lord make me to know my end, and the measure of my days*: He was sure that the knowledge of his end would put him in a sober and patient frame.

V I. The sixth advantage is this, The faith of approaching death, will teach the person that hath it, to study saving wisdom: This is clear, *Pf. 90. 12. Where David putteth up his request, So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.* As if he had said, I will never think my self wise, till I know that blessed piece of Arithmetick, *how to number my days*. I would desire every one of you all to think with your self every morning when you rise, now I am a day nearer unto eternity than I was before: and at the end of every hour, now I am an hour nearer unto eternity than I was before; I say, think often, yea always thus, I was never so near my death as I am now; For, Oh! are we not all nearer unto eternity to day, than we were yester-day?

V I I. The seventh advantage, attending the faith of approaching Death, is this, That it will make a Christian very careful in preparing for Death. It is impossible for one to believe really that death is approaching, and not to prepare for it. Say what ye will, if ye be not careful in preparing for death, ye have not the solid faith of this truth, that ye shall die. Believe me, it is not every one that thinketh he believeth this truth that believeth it indeed. And O how dreadful is it to an unprepared man to meet with death? He deth not to die, yea, he would give a world for his life: but die he must, whether he will or not: for death will not be requested, to spare a little when he cometh. And therefore I say unto you all, *Set your house in order, for ye shall surely die*: old men and women, *set your house in order, for to-morrow ye may die, and be cut off in the flower of your Age*. Think not that there be any who can sell time: for I say, ye shall never get time sold unto you.

Alas, I fear that the most part of persons that die now, death findeth them at unawares; for indeed the persons that die amongst us, when we come to visit them, we may give you a sad account of them, for we think they are comprehended under these four sorts.

1. First, When we go to visit some persons on their Death-bed, they are like unto *Nabal* *their heart is dying and sinking* (like unto a stone) within them; they are no more affected with death, than if it were a fancy; alas, for the great stupidity that hath overtaken many; Therefore I intreat you delay not your repentance till death, lest the Lord take away your wit, so that ye cannot repent for your senselessness and stupid frame of spirit.

2. A second sort we find in a presumptuous frame, saying, They have had a good hope all their days, and they will not quite it now; they will go down to the grave with their hope in their right hand; or rather they will go down to the grave *with a lie in their right hand*; they live in a presumptuous frame, and they die in the same delusion. For when we tell them that by all probability they are going down to hell, they answer, God forbid, I was all my time a very honest man, or woman: But I love not that confession, for there are many such honest men and women in hell this day.

3. The third sort we find, having some convictions that they have been playing the fool all their days; but we can get them no further; I shall only say to such, to go down to the grave with convictions in their breast, not making use of Christ, is to go down to hell with a candle in their hand, to let them see the way; and truly the greatest part that die, die in this manner.

4. Fourthly, There are some whom we find in a self-righteous frame, resting upon the Covenant of Works and their own merits, and trusting by these, to go to Heaven; yet neglecting the offer of Christ's righteousness. But, alas, we find not one of a thousand in this frame, I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, that's best.

test of all : And scarce do we find any in such a frame, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Therefore I say this unto you all who are here, O wil ye mind death before it take hold on you. Oh mind your work now ; for ye will find that death will be work enough for it self, though ye leave no work till then.

VIII. The eighth advantage that attendeth the Christian in believing this truth that once he must die, is this, death will not be so terrible to him as it is unto many when it cometh. What (think ye) maketh death a king of terrors ? What maketh many to shake like the leaf of a tree, when they are summoned to appear before Gods Tribunal ? It is even because of this, they have not been thinking on death before it came, so as to prepare for it, and I fear many in this place may be feared for death; and that when it cometh to them, they will say unto death, as Abab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? Surely death will take you, and bring you to the judgment seat of Christ ; Therefore study by all means to think often upon it, and make ready for it ; (believe me) death is a very big word, for it will once make you stand with horror in your souls, if your peace be not made up with God ; I know not a more dreadful dispensation than death and a guilty conscience meeting together.

The second thing that I shall speak unto from this first observation (viz. This is a most certain and infallible truth, that all persons shall once see death) shall be to give you some considerations for pressing you to prepare for death.

I. The first consideration is this, To die well, and in the Lord, is a most difficult work ; therefore I intice you to prepare for death. It is a difficult work to communicate aright, it is a difficult work to pray aright, and it is a difficult work to confess aright ; But I must tell you it is a more difficult work to die aright, than any of these. It is true, it is more difficult to communicate aright

right, than to pray aright, yet it is much more difficult to die aright, than to communicat aright, For it is a more difficult work to die in the Lord. Death will put the most accurate Christian that is here to a wonderful search; and therefore I will tell you nine things that death will try in thee. 1. Death will try both the reality and strength of thy Faith. It may be easie for thee to keep up Faith under many difficulties, but death shall put thy Faith to the greatest stress that ever it did meet with. Yea know this, that the faith of the strongest believer may get (and ordinarily doth get) a set at death, the like whereof it never got before, therefore prepare for death. 2. Death will try thy love to God; some persons pretend much love to him, but death will propose this question to such a person, *Lovest thou him more than these? Lovest thou him more than thy wife? more than thy house? more than thy friends?* But your unwillingness to die giveth us much ground to fear that many have little love to Christ, but much to the World, and so dare not answer the question, *Lord, thou knowest I love Thee.* 3. Death will try thine enjoyments, some of you may be ready to think that ye meet with many enjoyments, so that ye might reckon (as you think) to forty enjoyments and sweet out-lettings: but beware that death bring them not down to twenty: I have known some, who thought they have met forty times with God, but when death came, it made them eake down the count to the half; therefore seiug death will try the reality of thine enjoyments O prepare for it. 4. Death will try thy patience. Thou may seem to have much patience now, but when death cometh (and thou art put to die) it will put thy patience to a great tryal therefore prepare for it. 5. Death will try the reality of thy duties, yea even these duties wherein thou had most satisfaction, as thy communicating aright in such a place, thou hopest that is sure: thy reading the Scripture at such a time aright thou hopest that is sure; thou prayed at such a time aright, and hopest

hopest that is sure; thou meditated in such a place aright, and hopest that is sure. But (believe me) death may make thee change thy thoughts; for there are some persons who have communicated, and prayed, &c. as right as any in this generation, who (for all that) will not find six duties wherein they can find satisfaction at death; Therefore our need is great to prepare for it. 6. Death will exceedingly try thy sincerity when it cometh; An hy pocrite may go all along his whole way undiscovered, yet death may bring him to light, and make it appear what man he is. 7. Death will discover unto thee many hid and secret sins of which thou never had a thought before, yea, albeit thou thought these had been forgotten, death will let thee see them standing between thee and the light of his countenance. 8. Death will accurately try thy Mortification, some will think they have come a great length in Mortification; but (believe me) death will try it, and put it to the Touch-stone. 9. Death will try thy hope, whether it be real or not. I shall only say this, that all the other graces must low the sail to Faith, and so it is Faith must carry us thorow, being that last triumphing grace, which must sit the field for us, when all the other graces will faint and ly by. It is Faith that must enter us fairly within the borders of eternity; It is Faith must gainstand all the Temptations of death, yea, all the other graces must (as it were) stand by, and see Faith strike the last stroke in the War.

II. The second consideration to press you to mind death, is this, that ye are to die but once, and the wrong doing of which can never be helped. If ye pray not aright, ye may get that mended, if ye meditate not aright, ye may get that mended, and if ye communicate not aright, ye may get that mended; but alas, if ye die not aright, there is no mending of that; Therefore, O prepare for death, that ye may die well, seeing ye are to die but once.

III. The third consideration to press you to mind death, is this, That they are pronounced blessed who die in the Lord, Rev. 14. 12. *blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.* O let that provock you to prepare for death, that so ye may die in the Lord. that is the only way to make you eternally happy. I confess it is a question difficult to determine, whether it be more difficult to die well, or to live well; I shal not answer it, but rather desire you to study both.

IV. The fourth consideration to press you to prepare for death, is this, viz. That though thou put all thy work by thy hand before death, yet shalt thou find that death shall have work enough for it self, yea, as much as thou shalt get done. It will then be much for thee to win to patience, it will be much for thee to win to the sight of thy justification: and it will then be much more for thee to win to assurance. O then is it not needful for thee to put all thy work by hand before thy latter end come? Wherefore I may say to you as Moses said in his Song, Deut. 32. 29. *O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!* O that ye had this piece of divine wisdom! I pray you consider that sad word, Lam. 8. 19. *She remembred not her latter end, and what of it? therefore she came down wonderfully.* So will the down coming of many in this generation be wonderful, who consider not their last end.

V. The fifth consideration for pressing you to prepare for death, is this, viz. That their labour shall end but their work shall not be forgotten, as is clear from that forecited place, Rev. 14. 13. *They rest from their labour, and their work follow them:* and is not that a glorious advantage.

VI. The sixth consideration to press you to prepare for death, is this, viz. That death may come upon you ere ye be aware, ye know not but death may surprise you this night before ye go home to your house, and therefore let that press you to study a constant preparation for death.

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VII. The seventh Consideration to press you to prepare for Death, is this, *viz.* That as Death leaveth you, so will judgement find you; if Death shall leave you strangers to Christ, ye shall appear before him strangers to him, therefore I intreat you all to prepare for it. I think that noble practice of *Paul* exceeding worthy of imitation, 1 Cor. 15: 31. *I die daily*, which I think doth comprehend these three things. 1. That *Paul* had Death always in his sight. 2. It comprehendeth this, that he endeavoured to keep such a frame, as every moment he should be ready to die, so that whensoever Death should put the summons in his hand, he would be content to answer. 3. It comprehendeth this, that he laboureth to lay aside and remove all things out of the way, that might detain him from laying down his tabernacle. O saith *Paul*, I labour to clear my self of all hinderances, as that when ever I shall be summoned to remove out of time, I may willingly lay down my life. Therefore I would ask you this question, *viz.* When shall you make your last Testament? I think it were suitable for us to be renewing our Latter will every day, for in so doing, *Paul* made an excellent Testament, the better of which none that died since have made, 2 Tim. 4: 7, 8. *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith*; these are very sweet Articles: and then he addeth, *Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day.* And think ye not that very sweet, that he would leave something unto you in Christ's Name, *viz.* And that not for me only, but for all them that wait for his appearance. Now I come to the third thing proposed, *viz.* to give some Directions for helping you to prepare for Death.

Direction 1. I intreat you be much in preparation for Death every day, for it is even a preparation for Heaven, to be taking a sight of your Grave and latter end every day.

Direction 2.

Direct. 2. I intreat you be much in those Duties, *First*, In Self-examination; that your Counts may be clear with God, for many a ragged count shall ye have when Death and we shall meet. *Secondly*, Be much in the exercise of Repentance, that so ye may have every fault and corruption in you mourned for, before death and you meet. *Thirdly*, Be much in the exercise of Faith, *making your calling and election sure?* *Fourthly*, Be much in the exercise of Mortification, and that will help you to keep a loose grip, not only of the world, but also of your idols; and if ye be much in these, ye shall undoubtedly be prepared for Death.

Direct. 3. Be much in minding the excellent things of Heaven. A Christian that would be prepared for Death, would have all his thoughts and conversation there. I think it would be an excellent help (in preparation for Death) to take a sight of the Crown every day.

Direct. 4. Labour always to keep a good Conscience void of offence towards God and man: I say labour to keep thy Conscience clear, and that shall be a continual feast unto thee.

Direct. 5. Slight not thy known Duty, do not crucify any conviction, neither break any resolution, put these three together, and that will exceedingly help you to prepare for Death: I say, see that ye adventure not to slight any known Duty; see that ye adventure not to crucify any conviction, and see that ye adventure not to break your resolutions.

Now we come to the second thing which we observed from the words, *viz.* That this Truth, that we shall once see death, is not much believed by any of us. And to make this appear, we shall only give some Evidences unto you, to prove that we are not as yet prepared for Death.

I. Evidence. Doth not the unspeakable stupidity that hath overtaken many, say, that we are not a People prepared for death? Alas, many of us would find our
selves

selves in a most stupid temper, if we were presently to die; for many of us are no more moved with the threatnings and terrors of God, than if they did not belong unto us; and this saith, we are not as yet prepared for Death.

II. *Evidence*, That we are not prepared for Death, is our pursuing so much after vain and passing delights of a present world. Many of us rise up early, and go late to bed at night, and eateth the bread of sorrow all the day, and loadeth themselves with the thick clay; And I am sure that such a person. (being night and day taken up with the world) is not prepared for death. I remember a word recorded of such a wretched one, who was exceedingly rich, said he, I would give so many thousands of money, if death would give me but one day: yet he got it not. And, O how suddenly will death surprise many of us, as it did him.

III. *Evidence*, Which speaketh forth our unpreparedness for death, is our impatience under every petty cross that we meet with; for the prepared Christian will be patient under very sharp crosses.

IV. *Evidence*, That we are not prepared, is our not endeavouring to live within sight of our interest in God. Oh, if we were prepared for death, durst we live in so much uncertainty of our interest in God, and of our assurance of Heaven?

V. *Evidence*, Some of us can let our idols ly in our breast six years without repentance, and will never study to mortifie them, nor to repent for them; and surely such are not prepared for death.

Now I intreat you seriously to mind what hath been said; and that ye may the more seriously think upon it, I will tell you some material challenges that your conscience at death will present unto you, therefore take heed, that ye may know how ye will answer.

I. *Challenge*, Is the slighting of much precious time, and sinning away the precious offers of grace. O what will ye answer to that challenge when death shall present

sent it to you, Death will say (or rather thine own conscience at death) what aileth thee to sin so many hours without either praying, reading, or meditating? Now have ye any thing to answer when death shall present this challenge to you? I intreat you premeditate what ye will say: I intreat you, prevent death by presenting it first seriously to your selves.

2. *Challenge*, That Death will present unto you, will be for the killing of many precious convictions which we have had. What will each of you answer at death, when your conscience proposeth this challenge unto you? Thou met with such a challenge at such a time, and went home and crucified it: when at another time, thou met with another challenge, and went home and crucified it; These challenges will be laid to thy door, therefore think on them.

3. *Challenge*, Death will challenge you for a formal hypocritical way of going about duties, I say, your conscience will then tell you that ye went to such a communion with a selfish end; and at another time, ye prayed hypocritically and formally. And what will ye have to answer when ye meet with these challenges? I confess I know not what ye can answer to these, but I charge you, be thinking what ye will answer, for it may be that these convictions shall ly on your consciences, that even this day ye have heard two searching Sermons, and did meet with some convictions, but made no good use of them; yea, and it may be ye did sleep all the time. O what will ye answer, when it shall be said to you, ye went to such a Sermon, and slept all the time: and ye went to such a Communion, but no other end before your eyes, but to be seen of men: I intreat you consider presently what ye will answer to these.

4. *Challenge*, Will be for your breaking of many precious resolutions. It will be said to some of you, that at the Communion, in this place ye took on vows, and did break them; I am sure ye cannot que-

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tion the justice of the challenge; therefore see what ye will answer.

5. *Challenge*, Ye slighted many precious offers of the Gospel. O men and women in this City, what will ye answer to this? I was often exhorted to take Christ, and yet would never take him. What will conscience say to that, when death shall table it before you? I tell you what ye must then answer; O cursed I, that ever I refused Christ in the Gospel. And ye shall then be confounded, because this is your sin; Believe me, there was never an offer of this everlasting Gospel, and of Christ in it, made unto you, that shall not at death (before or after) be brought to your remembrance. And, O how sad and doleful will it be to you, when Christ shall open the Book wherein all your sins are written, and begin with the sin of slighting the great Salvation? Thus I invited you, when ye were twelve years old, but ye would not come. What will ye answer to this! Have ye any thing to say? Or must ye not stand speechless before your Judge, when he shall put home this Challenge unto you? Therefore think seriously upon it, how ye will answer it.

6. *Challenge*, Will be for your sinning oftentimes against Light; and, O how painful and sad a challenge will that be at the day of death, when it will be said, thou sinnedst with a witness in thy bosom, that thou wast doing wrong; thy conscience will say oftentimes did I tell thee this is sinful, yet wouldest thou not abstain from it; and what will ye answer to this?

7. *Challenge*, Oftentimes ye sinned upon very small temptation, and what will ye answer to that? Must ye not then confess it, and say, O how often have I deserted Christ, and embraced my idols upon a small temptation? Now I intreat you be thinking what ye will answer to these seven most material Challenges, which certainly shall be presented to you at death. I assure you, ye must either answer all your Challenges in Christ, else ye will not get them well answered. Therefore

fore I would exhort you to embrace the Gospel and Christ in it; and so let death propose never so many Challenges unto you, ye may answer them all as David did, viz. *God hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, (and that will answer all your Challenges) though my house be not so with God, yet I have the everlasting Covenant to build my Salvation upon.*

Now to press you to make use of Christ, I shall give you these four Considerations.

Consideration 1. If ye imbrace not Christ now, Death will be very unpleasant unto you. O what else can comfort thee, when going through the region of the shadow of Death, but this, I am Christ's, I am Christ's? Is there any other thing can comfort thee in that day, but only this, *I am Christ's, and he is mine.*

Consideration 2. If ye imbrace not Christ and the great Salvation now, it will be an hundred to one if ever ye get time or liberty to do it, when ye are going to die. For although many delay their closing with Christ till death, yet scarcely one of an hundred getteth favour to grip Christ at death, therefore think on it for ye will not get your mind so composed at death as ye imagine, nor all things done as ye suppose, therefore now imbrace the great Salvation.

Consideration 3. If ye delay your closing with Christ till death seise upon you, ye shall never be able to make up that loss. For will the dead rise and praise God. Or shall any come from the land of forgetfulness, to take hold upon a crucified Saviour? Therefore, O will ye take him for your Salvation.

Consideration 4. If ye will take Christ now, he shall be your guide, when ye are going through the valley and shadow of death. And O how blessed is the person that can sing that word, *Psal. 48. 14. This is my God, he will be my guide even unto death.* If ye can sing that pleasant song. O how may ye be comforted, when your eye strings shall begin to break? O how happy is he who can say, *Though I walk through the shadow of death, yet will I fea*

I fear no ill; for I know the Lord is with me. Now this is the acceptable day, and the year of Salvation, therefore do not delay, but imbrace Christ, lest death surprise you ere ye be aware, and so that acceptable day be lost. But unto these who think they may delay till death, I say, surely there are many damned Atheists in hell that (sometimes) did think as ye think; I will make all wrongs right when death and I shall meet; I hope that three days repentance will satisfie for all my wrong; for I am sure, there are many in hell, who did never get three days to think upon their former ways; Therefore, O come, come, and imbrace Christ presently. Now are ye all perswaded of this truth, that ye shall once see death? Then study a tender walking, for (believe me) here are many of us who shall go thorow death with many bruised bones, because of untender walking before God. We know it is not the multitude of words can perswade you to imbrace Christ, for many of you never minded the thing: but (believe me) death will preach these things to you in a more terrible manner than we can do at this time. Therefore I say to each of you, O prepare to meet thy God; for if death find you in an estranged state from God, I defy the Angels in Heaven to free you out of that estate, and the day is coming, wherein thou shalt cry out, O slaughter of the great Salvation that I am, I would give ten thousand worlds for one Sermon again that I once heard, wherein Christ was freely offered to me, When thou shalt be tormented without hope of remedy; Therefore, While it is to day, burden not your hearts, for your late wishes shall not be granted (when ye are gone) if ye make not haste, O therefore Haste, haste, in time, and come out from the land of your captivity, and from the house of your bondage, and take Christ for your Redeemer; the guide of your youth and old age. Now unto him who can lead you thorow all these steps betwixt you and Heaven, be eternal praise. Amen.

F I N I S.

